PCGG: All Marcos cases over in 2 years

STORY ON PAGE A2

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Estrada no longer hot issue

BY JULIET JAVELLANA

SILA-SILA LANG ...WALA AKONG SAY DUN.

FORMER President Joseph Estrada is no longer a political issue. This was the conclu-

ESTRADA/ A18

Labor chief right; Inquirer story wrong

LABOR Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas is right, and the INQUIRER is wrong.

PDI Readers' Advocate Raul Palabrica investigated Sto. Tomas' complaint regarding the accuracy of the INQUIRER's July 8 banner story, "DOLE backs P125 raise."

The story was based on a supposed press statement that quoted Sto. Tomas as saying that

LABOR/ A18

'A new day has dawned'

Ousted President finally arraigned on four counts of plunder

BY MARTIN P. MARFIL, ALCUIN PAPA AND PHILIP C. TUBEZA

"WITH the prosecution and indictment of a President, even while sitting as President, a new day has finally dawned for our country and people.

"The clarion call to arms, the warning must ring loud, clear and unmistakable to one and all—that, henceforth, even the powerful and the mighty will be held to account for, and explain, their acts."

The warning, which came from the resolution of the Sandiganbayan Third Division denying house arrest for deposed President Joseph Estrada, rang loud and clear yesterday with his arraignment on a charge of four counts of plunder, a crime punishable by death.

With his arraignment, Estrada becomes the first Philippine president to stand trial for corruption.

In arraignment proceedings, the accused is brought personally to court and charges are read to him. The judge then asks whether the accused pleads guilty to the charges.

As in his arraignment on June 27 for the lesser charge of perjury, Estrada did not enter a plea on the plunder charge.

"On the advice of my lawyer, I refuse to enter any plea," the deposed President told Justice Anacleto Badoy Jr.

Badoy entered a plea of "not guilty" for Estrada.

His co-accused, son Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada and lawyer Edward Serapio also refused to enter a plea. The court also entered "not guilty" pleas for Estrada's co-accused.

During his nearly three-hour court appearance, Estrada told the justices of the anti-graft court that he objected to references in formal charges that also identified him as Jose Velarde and Asiong Salonga, the aliases he allegedly used to amass ill-gotten wealth. "Asiong Salonga" is a movie about a Tondo toughie with a soft heart for the poor played by Estrada in the 1960s.

"I am not known as Jose Velarde. I am not Asiong Salonga," he addressed the court.

"I would like to clarify that I was a former mayor of San Juan, former senator of the Philippines, a former Vice President and President of the Republic of the Philippines," Estrada said.

A NEW/ A18

DOWN IN THE DUMPS

As it was last year when 200 people were killed in a garbage landslide, so it is today at the Payatas dump in Quezon City where thousands continue to brave its gagging stench to earn a living. *(Story on Page A4.)*

AP

CRISIS OVER?

Economy to rebound if...

BY GIL CABACUNGAN JR AND AQUILES Z. ZONIO
PDI Mindanao Bureau

BUSINESSMEN are looking forward to an economic rebound in the fourth quarter of this year if President Macapagal-Arroyo fulfills her promise of solving the crisis involving the Abu Sayyaf and other kidnap-for-ransom groups.

Raul T. Concepcion, chair of the Federation of Philippine Industries, said that with the solution of the country's serious security problems, both the government and the private sector could concentrate on putting the economy on the path to recovery.

"The second half (of the year) should provide a fresh start . . . with the President's commitment to pump-prime the economy as her next objective after tackling the security problems," said Concepcion, whose family is supposedly among those tagged as prime targets by kidnap syndicates.

The military expects to smash the Abu Sayyaf with the capture Sunday of Nadzmie Saabdulla alias Commander Global, said to be the chief of staff of the Sulu-based faction of the bandit group.

"Definitely, we can get information that will lead to the arrest and capture of other leaders and their members," Agence France Presse yesterday quoted Col. Danilo Servando, spokesperson of the Armed Forces' Southern Command as saying.

Members of a composite team from the Philippine National Police, AFP and National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica) recovered at noon yesterday 11 high-powered firearms and several rounds of ammunition supposedly left by Global's group in Barangay Daliao in Maasim, Sarangani province.

The arms cache consisted of four M203s, three M16s, two M14s, an M79 and a .45 cal pistol, and was reportedly hidden in a vacant house.

Abu Sayyaf members Halik

ECONOMIC/ A7

Rich Chinoys send kids to China amid kidnaps

BY ROCKY NAZARENO

XIAMEN, China—Wealthy Chinese-Filipino families are sending their children to schools here in a serious—and expensive—effort to avoid risks that they may be kidnapped for ransom in the Philippines.

Dr. Li Yi Ping, director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies of the Xiamen University, made this disclosure in noting the upsurge in enrolment of Chinese-Filipino students in schools in this city.

Li told Manila-based reporters in an interview at the university campus that Chinese-Filipinos sent their children to study here during periods when kidnap-for-ransom cases were reported on the rise.

"Once the situation (in Manila) improves, they return (there)," Li said.

In a press statement issued late last month, Sen. Loren Legarda said 47 members of the Chinese-Filipino community had been kidnapped for ransom during the past six months.

Ma. Corazon Yap-Bahjin, Philippine consul general to Xiamen, said the parents were putting up with the higher cost of education here and the long periods of separation just to ensure their children's safety.

"They send their children because they're afraid of kidnapping," she said.

Because the matter is largely under wraps, the Philippine consu-

RICH/ A6

Cuevas takes pity on ex-boss

BY CATHY YAMSUAN

IT TOOK former Justice Secretary Serafin Cuevas a month to decide before accepting his new role as defense lawyer of deposed President Joseph Estrada in his plunder case before the Sandiganbayan.

Their old spat over the questionable parole granted to priest killer Norberto Manero apparently made Cuevas think hard before agreeing to defend Estrada.

Estrada signed an order during his presidency granting parole to Manero, skipping a legal requirement to have the convict's case reviewed first by the Department of Justice then under Cuevas.

Cuevas asserted the DOJ's participation and got the ire of Estrada.

Then Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora later admitted that

CUEVAS/ A18

VAL HANDUMON

FAMILY portrait of the accused at the Sandiganbayan, ousted President Estrada and Jinggoy Estrada flank Sen. Loi Ejercito-Estrada. Behind is Estrada son-in-law Beaver Lopez.

SENATE ROW

Drilon 'elated'; 23 senators upset

BY CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO AND JULIET JAVELLANA

THE ONLY senator who was "elated" by the report that President Macapagal-Arroyo had expressed preference for Sen. Franklin Drilon to head the Senate was Drilon himself.

In an apparent move to settle the festering rivalries among four senators in the People Power Coalition (PPC) aspiring for the Senate presidency, Vice President Teofisto Guingona is set to meet tonight with administration senators.

It was not certain whether tonight's meeting would include the senators from the PPC's coalition partner, the Lakas-NUCD, President Macapagal's party, which is reportedly supporting Sen. Rene Cayetano.

Yesterday, Cayetano warned that the President's alleged choice might cause the breakup of the administration coalition.

"If the news reports are true, I am not certain if this would result in the complete unity among Senate members of the PPC to choose a common candidate for Senate president," Cayetano said in a statement.

Sen. Juan Flavier, who's bruited about as a "dark horse" in the race, warned that if PPC senators cannot get their act together, either current Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. retains the Senate leadership or it goes to the opposition.

The lone opposition candidate is Sen. Edgardo Angara.

DRILON/ A6

NAKU... PROMISE, HA!

PCGG: Marcos cases over in 2 years

New task force created to review raps against cronies

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government is confident it can meet its self-imposed deadline of two years to resolve all the cases against the heirs of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and their cronies.

Amid growing calls for its abolition, the PCGG announced the creation of a new task force to review all pending criminal cases against the Marcoses and their associates.

PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza Jr. said the team would review the status of the cases pending in the Sandiganbayan and Supreme Court to see how far litigation has gone.

"We want to move the cases that have been stuck in arraignment after all these years," said Carranza who noted the many cases that are pending in the courts.

He cited the case against businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. concerning his claim to the Manila Bulletin newspaper, which the Supreme Court recently allowed to be filed in the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court. Cojuangco has appealed the ruling.

Aside from Cojuangco, the more prominent of the Marcos cronies against whom the government has pending criminal and civil suits are Chinese-Filipino businessman Lucio Tan, Alfredo Romualdez and Herminio Disini, the latter two relatives of the Marcos widow, Imelda.

Very slowly

Carranza said the cases had been moving very slowly in the courts because of the "obvious dilatory tactics" being resorted to by the defendants' team of top-caliber lawyers.

He said the Sandiganbayan had reprimanded the cronies' counsels because of trivial motions, such as the motion for particulars and motion to review the cases, which are simply meant to delay the proceedings.

Carranza stressed, however, that he was confident the PCGG can complete the litigation against the Marcoses and their cronies within the two-year deadline.

The PCGG earlier set 2003 as its deadline to resolve the Marcos cases so it can devote itself full-time to the recovery of the wealth that Marcos allegedly plundered during his 20 years of power, which has reportedly been laundered in various countries.

"The two-year deadline is the long-term thing," Carranza said. "But to do that, we must get more lawyers competent in the (prosecution of) ill-gotten wealth cases."

The problem with the country's best lawyers, however, is that they prefer to take on the cause of the cronies who are able to pay them well for their services, Carranza said.

Senate bill

The PCGG is also up against a Senate bill filed by Sen. Sergio Osmeña seeking its abolition. The senator said the agency had done "little" over the past 15 years of existence.

Though he said he "understands where the senator is coming from," Carranza said the government "might lose its focus" if Congress approves the proposal to transfer the functions the PCGG to a branch of the justice department.

"Whether the PCGG has been a success or a failure is not the more significant issue, but that the PCGG has had experience in dealing with ill-gotten wealth pursuit," he said.

Since its inception in 1986, the PCGG has recovered about P88 billion of the Marcos ill-gotten wealth but its critics believe there is still so much more stashed away that the government has not been able to identify or recover.

DECS: No more shortage of books, classrooms soon

THE EDUCATION department has ambitiously announced an end to textbook and classroom shortages in three years.

Education Undersecretary Isagani Cruz said the influx of foreign donors would allow the department to build enough schools and buy a sufficient amount of instructional materials for public schools by 2004.

Speaking at the relaunch of the Third Elementary Education Project, Cruz said the Department of Education, Culture and Sports would ensure "zero backlog" in both textbooks and classrooms, which have been the perennial problems of state-run educational institutions.

The TEEP is an P18-billion education improvement program funded by the World Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, covering the period 1997 to 2004.

It focuses on the country's 22 poorest provinces: Batanes, Apayao, Kalinga, Mt. Province, Benguet, Ifugao, Aurora, Masbate, Romblon, Eastern Samar, Biliran, Antique, Guimaras, Capiz, Leyte, Southern Leyte, Negros Oriental, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur, Zamboanga del Sur and Cotabato.

"(The TEEP) will lessen the gap between the rich and poor provinces," Cruz said. "If we raise the average of life of the poorest Filipinos, we will improve the average of life in general."

The DECS is set to build 1,617 new classrooms this year and repair 3,150. This will benefit some 240,000 public elementary school students.

The DECS has reported a shortage of 16,214 classrooms and 56.2 million textbooks this year.

Education Secretary Raul Roco earlier said the DECS was working on a book-to-student ratio of 1.1:1 to improve the current ratio of 1:2, but that the budget was not sufficient to make the necessary textbook purchases this schoolyear.

Blanche S. Rivera

15 foreigners held in stock fraud

AUTHORITIES yesterday detained 15 foreigners believed to be Europeans on suspicion they were involved in stock fraud, National Bureau of Investigation officials said.

NBI and Securities and Exchange Commission agents raided an office late on yesterday in the Makati business district where the foreigners were suspected of running an operation in which they duped foreigners abroad into investing in shares of non-existent companies.

NBI officials said the foreigners were believed to be from Europe but declined to identify them. Authorities were still trying to verify the foreigners' passports at relevant embassies.

"The victims of this scam are mostly retired foreign nationals who browse the Internet and play the stock market," a senior NBI official told reporters.

The suspects were under investigation and could face charges of violating the Securities Act as they were suspected of selling securities without a license and making transactions through misrepresentation, the NBI official said.

Reuters

400 new architects

COMMISSIONER Alfonso G. Abad, acting chair of the Professional Regulation Commission, yesterday announced that 400 out of 1,085 passed the Architect Licensure Examination given by the Board of Architecture in Manila in June. The results of examination with respect to four examinees were withheld pending final determination of their liabilities under the rules and regulations governing licensure examination. ***(See complete list of successful examinees on www.INQ7.net.)***

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Gov't to declare exclusion zone around Malampaya gas project

By J. Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is set to issue a proclamation declaring an exclusion and safety zone around the Malampaya natural gas project in Palawan ahead of its commercial operations in January.

Malampaya will generate about 16 percent of the country's total electricity supply beginning next year and reduce by at least $670 million its annual oil imports of $2 to $3 billion, presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said.

The Malampaya project is one of the positive economic developments that the President is expected to highlight in her first State of the Nation Address before the joint opening of Congress on July 23.

Tiglao said the $4.8-billion Malampaya project, located 80 km northwest off Palawan and begun two years ago, was on schedule.

It will be on stream by October and the first sales of fuel from the Malampaya field will be in January 2002, he told a press briefing on the results of yesterday's Cabinet meeting.

Tiglao said Malampaya was a "very big development" for the economy.

"It will send a signal that we are reducing our oil dependence, that our economy is starting to improve," he said.

Tiglao said the exclusion zone was needed because of concerns about the security of the facility, which sits in the middle of the sea.

The zone will cover a one-kilometer radius around the Malampaya platform, in which no vessels would be allowed to sail. No aircraft will be allowed to fly below 500 meters of the safety zone.

Tiglao said there was a "lively debate" at the Cabinet meeting about the state of the nation and the majority felt that "we're starting to turn the corner."

He said that after confronting political problems and challenges, Ms Macapagal would now be emphasizing her "actual, real vision, which isn't just meeting tactical challenges but transforming our economy and our society."

RP seeks China aid on 'shabu' menace

THE PHILIPPINES will seek greater cooperation with China to stem the growing influx of a methamphetamine called "shabu" from its Asian neighbor, a government official said yesterday.

"We're initiating a stronger agreement with the Chinese government to stop this," said Miguel Coronel, executive director of the National Drug Enforcement and Prevention Coordinating Center. "It's best if we and the Chinese government will help each other in curtailing smuggling of shabu into the country."

About 721 kilograms of shabu were seized last year. Coronel said 75 percent of shabu traffickers were entering the Philippines from China, with the overall number who have been caught rising to 103 last year from 72 in 1999. So far this year, 20 of 30 foreign traffickers caught were Chinese, he said. *AP*

Ople hits Berroya transfer

SEN. Blas Ople said yesterday Central Luzon would be watching Senior Supt. Reynaldo Berroya who has been assigned to head the Philippine National Police command there even as other senators hailed the relief of Berroya as PNP intelligence chief.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel admitted pressure from the Filipino-Chinese community may have influenced President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision.

"I think the Filipino-Chinese community has its own preferences for the various positions in the police department, primarily because they... are targeted for kidnapping or for other acts of harassment by criminal elements," Pimentel said.

Ople, who hails from Bulacan, described Berroya as a "very controversial man" and the revamp a "reassignment of people according to their desserts."

Armand N. Nocum

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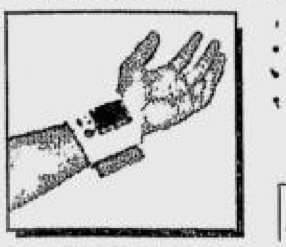

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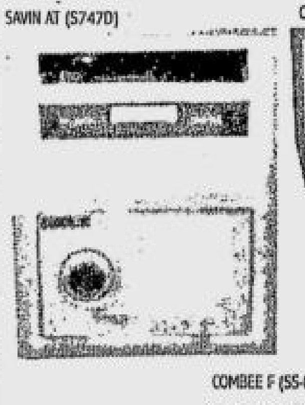

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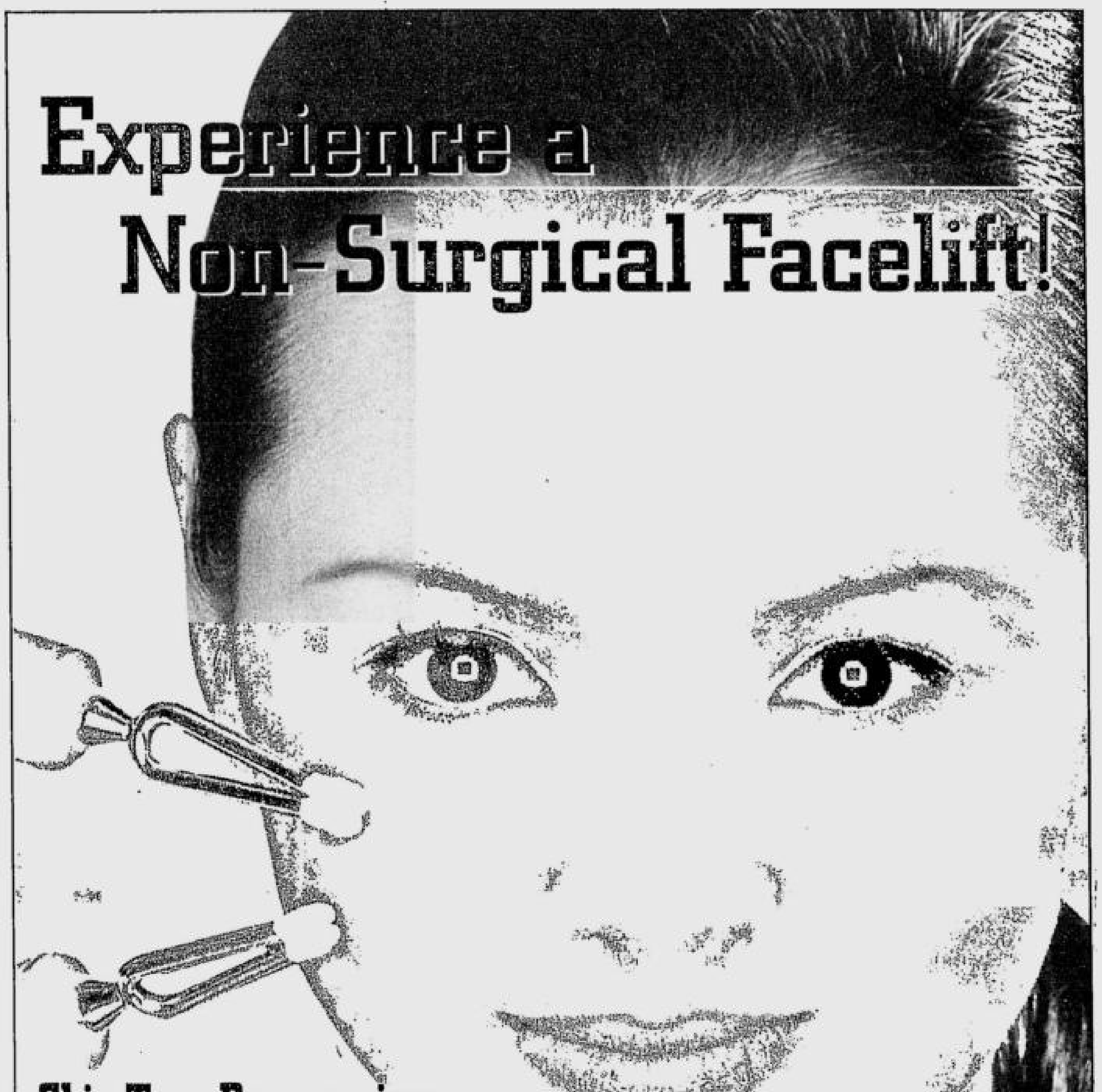

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Mourners gather to remember kin swallowed by Payatas dump

AMID swarms of flies and a gagging stench, Gloria Allado lit candles yesterday to remember her sister, who was swallowed by a massive mountain of garbage a year ago in Payatas, Quezon City.

Allado lives 50 meters from the burial place—the towering, fetid Payatas dump that collapsed July 10, 2000, and killed more than 200 people who made a living by sorting through and recycling the garbage.

"I will not leave my sister as long as I live," the 59-year-old woman said, pointing to the menacing mound of rotten fruit, moldy rice, motor oil, shredded plastic bags and other refuse that has decomposed into a toxic mud and oozes a black oily creek through her backyard.

But the 200-meter-high mountain of rot, hammered by typhoons and monsoons and baked by the tropical sun, has developed another fault line, threatening Allado and other survivors.

Despite the imminent danger and the international attention drawn by the last tragedy, little has changed in the past year in Payatas, a garbage mountain range with 120,000 inhabitants.

The mountains, with the consistency of old porridge, trembled beneath the wheels of 120 dump trucks Tuesday.

In an apocalyptic scene, hundreds of the self-described scavengers, many with skin rashes and teeth nearly as black as the poisonous mud that caked their feet, followed in a swirl of flies, mangy dogs, diesel exhaust and flying cockroaches. They raced through boot-sucking toxic mud for the bottles, tin cans and plastic that can earn them as much as P150 a day.

Children, splashing and playing in the fetid runoff, spread skin fungi, tuberculosis, hook worms and stomach amoeba at an alarming rate, said Friedhelm Huth, a German doctor who works at a charity medical clinic near the mound.

"There are all kinds of illnesses directly from the garbage," Huth said as he examined family after family, mostly repeat patients, with recurring skin diseases. "They work in garbage, play in garbage and wash in garbage."

He said an influx of foreign aid after the accident ensured that many Payatas residents "are a bit better fed."

The government closed Payatas after the catastrophe last year but reopened it when it failed to find other dump spots and garbage started to pile up in nearby neighborhoods.

A clean air act passed last year, meant to ease air pollution in one of the world's dirtiest cities, forbid incineration and ensured the dump stayed open.

After the garbage slide, the government offered to relocate the affected scavengers, but many complained they could not find work elsewhere.

Charlene dela Cruz, a 40-year-old former garbage picker now unemployed, was relocated 10 km away after her house was buried in the slide and her 17-year-old daughter was pulled out barely alive.

But she said garbage was the only work she knew and she could no longer earn enough to survive.

"Those were the days of plenty," she said, pining for the times before the slide. "When I need money badly now, I go to the dump, but it is very hard."

From atop a soot-black smoldering mountain, dump security chief Saturnino Opilado traced the latest growing fault line with a sweep of his arm.

A rivulet ran through the divide, collecting toxins and, according to Opilado, showed the likely direction of the next slide.

He pointed to the dozens of shacks in the bull's eye—including Allado's structure of rusted corrugated tin and crumbly concrete.

Her reply failed to hide fears for her safety.

"I know it is dangerous," said Allado, who has worked the garbage for 11 years. "But I won't leave my sister."

She trembled as she described last year's slide.

"It was a boom and a grrr and a smash. It hurt my ears. I always cry and cry now." *AP*

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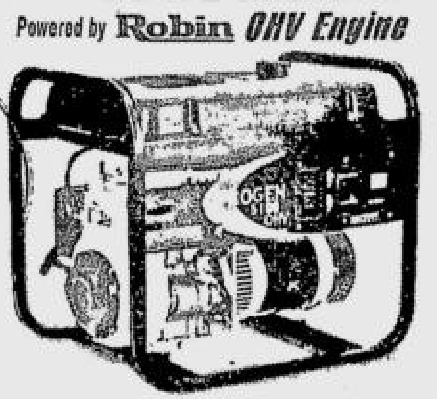

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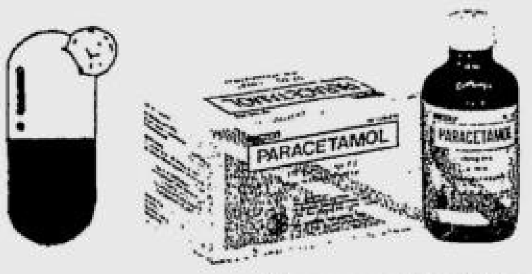

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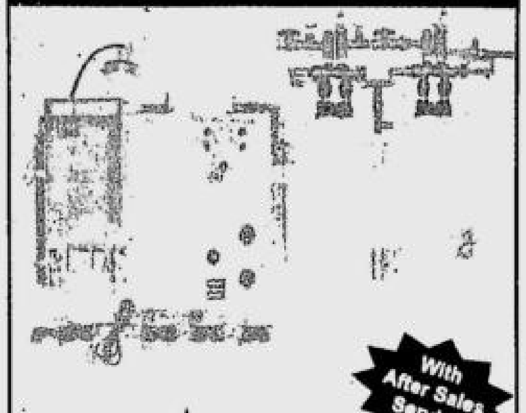

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World Population Day

July 11, 2001

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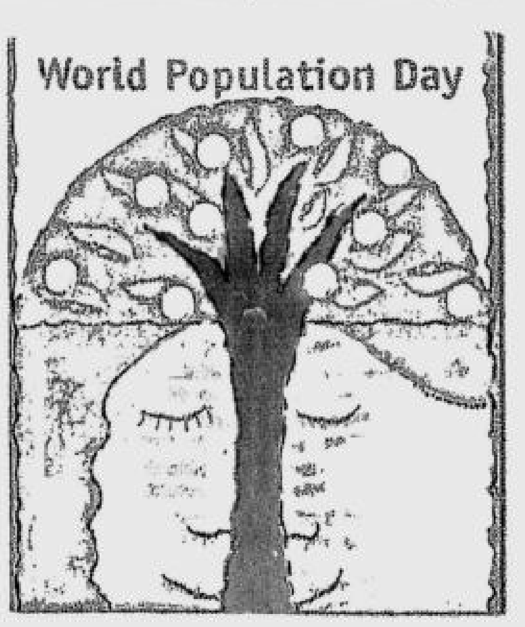

"Efforts to slow down population growth, to reduce poverty, to achieve economic progress, to improve environmental protection, and to reduce unsustainable consumption and production patterns are mutually reinforcing."
Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994)

Improve the status of women

Women are often closest to the earth – farming the land, collecting water, gathering firewood. Yet many lack the freedom to manage natural resources or even own the land they work. Women are potentially the greatest agents of change. Nearly 60 percent of women in developing countries now use family planning, and fertility has fallen by one half since 1950. Slower population growth places less pressure on the environment and gives countries more time to conserve and protect natural resources.

Consumption

Today's use of water, air, land and forests is placing unprecedented pressure on the environment – intensified by urbanization, globalization and migration. Already, demand for water exceeds supply in parts of the world and the land available for crops is decreasing. While millions struggle for a decent standard of living, the top one fifth live a high-consumption, high waste lifestyle: the richest 20 per cent of the world's people and countries account for 86 per cent of private consumption.

Sustainable Development

More than 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty have a right to better lives. The challenge is to improve living standards without destroying the environment. Environmental destruction, along with natural disasters had created 25 million environmental refugees by 1998. Immediate problems include increasing population pressure, food shortages, water scarcity, desertification, deforestation, extinction of plants and animals, global warming, reduced fish catches and health risks from pollution.

World Population Day Exhibit
Batasan Complex, Quezon City
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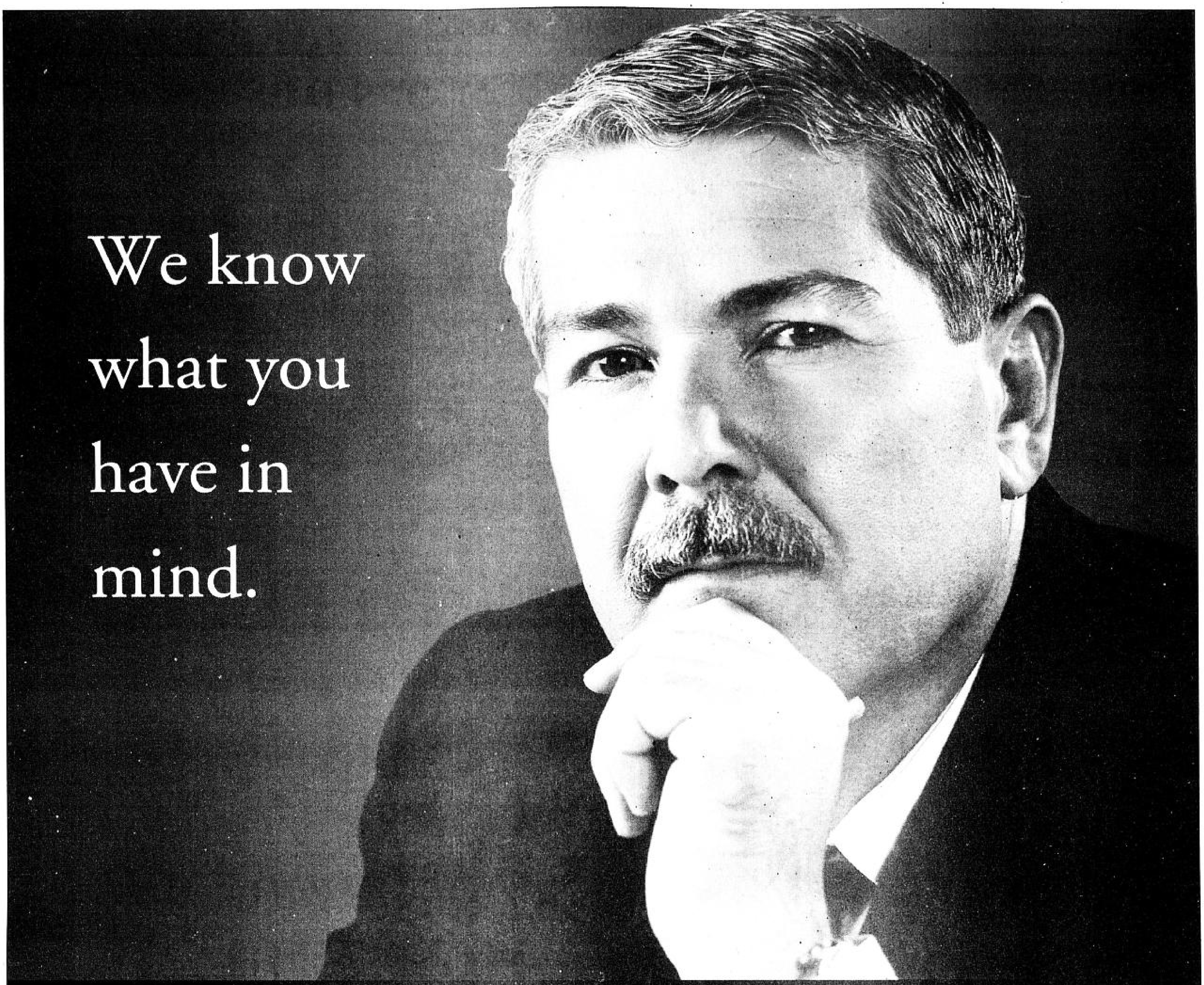
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Drilon 'elated', but 23 senators upset

(From page A1)

Aside from Drilon and Cayetano, the other PPC aspirants for the Senate's top post are Pimentel and Sen. Joker Arroyo.

In a news conference yesterday, Pimentel branded as "pure speculation" the INQUIRER report that Drilon is the President's choice, as he said he knows Cayetano would likely dispute such a report.

Pimentel also told reporters that none of the contenders has the 13 votes needed to oust him from the position.

But Sen. Robert Z. Barbers said that Pimentel of the PDP-Laban had no partymates in the Senate. So, the Senate presidency is a toss-up between Arroyo and Cayetano, said Barbers.

According to Barbers, Drilon is out because of his "perceived closeness with Angara."

"But I would rather wait for the result of my continuing talks with my colleagues in the PPC before I make any categorical statements on the matter," Drilon said in a statement.

He said the "agreed process of consultation" among PPC senators had just begun because they waited for the arrival of Pimentel, who planed in just over the weekend.

Opposition Senators Blas Ople, Vicente Sotto and Rodolfo Biazon immediately slammed what they claimed was President Macapagal's meddling in the affairs of the Senate.

"If she flaunts her power this way and is meddling in the affairs of the Senate so overtly and so brazenly, this will not be conducive to mutual respect between the two branches of government," Ople told reporters.

Internal affair

The Senate leadership is "still an internal affair."

President Macapagal's spokesperson, Rigoberto Tiglao, responded to the INQUIRER report on her choice of Drilon as the next Senate President.

Tiglao confirmed that the President had dinner with some senators over the weekend but denied it resulted in the endorsement of any of the aspirants.

"The President has scheduled dinners with senators, groups of congressmen and most probably they tried to get her feedback informally and her assessment of what the Senate should do but this dinner was not meant to choose a particular Senate President," Tiglao explained.

There were no such dinners in the President's schedule that were released to the media.

But last Friday, the President in her news conference, confirmed meeting with aspirants for the Senate President the previous weekend.

"Well, it was quite a free-wheeling discussion. So many things were discussed," she said.

Asked if she discussed a formula to resolve the leadership contest, the President said: "Well, technically, you know, the Senate is an independent body. So really, ideally they should resolve it among themselves."

Confirmed July 1 meeting

Although the contenders for the Senate leadership confirmed the July 1 meeting with President Macapagal as reported by the INQUIRER, they denied that that the President favors Drilon for the Senate leadership.

Senators Manuel Villar and Ralph Recto also denied that they were among the PPC senators that the President called over the weekend when she reportedly "floated" her preference for Drilon.

The INQUIRER named Villar and Recto in the so-called "House bloc" or former congressmen who had been elected to the Senate under the administration's PPC.

Villar said that he had just arrived from the US last Sunday. He left the country late June.

But he and Recto said if the President does endorse any of the contenders, the PPC's new senators would give this "weight" in their decision to support the coalition's common candidate for the Senate top post.

But Recto added that aside from factoring in the President's choice, they would consider their personal preferences, the values that the contenders represent—and the role of the new senators in the Senate, particularly the committees they would be asked to head.

The INQUIRER also reported that Ms Macapagal called up senators from her party, Lakas-NUCD, but Lakas Sen. Juan Flavier said he was not aware of such a meeting.

All he recalled was that the President called up the four aspirants (with Pimentel's daughter Gwen representing him since he was then abroad) for a meeting "Friday of last week" to urge them to get their act together.

Flavier said Gabriel Claudio, presidential liaison legislative officer, also attended the meeting.

In defense of President

Pimentel, Villar and Recto defended the President, saying that it was her prerogative as head of the PPC to express interest in the Senate presidency.

Ople and Biazon said they believe they will get votes in support of their candidate, Angara.

Biazon claimed that the opposition has now 11 votes on Angara's side, two votes away from winning the Senate leadership.

He said that the opposition has only one candidate-Angara-to carry, unlike the PPC, which still has to resolve who among the four would be its candidate.

Swing votes

Noting as "fairly accurate" the diagram of the five groupings in the Senate that the INQUIRER published last Tuesday, Recto said that he believes the PPC's new senators and not Senators Ramon Revilla, Robert Jaworski, Noli De Castro and John Osmena—would make up the "swing votes."

The INQUIRER had reported that Revilla and his son-in-law, Jaworski, De Castro and Osmena, described as "floating" or independents would be assiduously courted by the candidates.

Right now, the PPC and the political opposition in the Senate each have eight solid votes for their respective candidates. So, the votes of the independents would make the winning difference.

But Recto insisted that he, Villar, Arroyo and Pangilinan, which comprise the so-called House bloc in the Senate were all united as a group, unlike Revilla, Jaworksi, De Castro and John Osmena who were identified in the INQUIRER story as the ones with the swing votes.

The House bloc had endorsed Arroyo as its candidate to head the Senate.

Drilon admitted that the Senate presidency race remains undecided but he said without elaborating that "the picture has become much clearer than it was a few weeks ago."

He expressed confidence of his chances of winning the Senate presidency.

Rich Chinoys . . .

(From page A1)

late does not have an exact record of how many Chinese-Filipinos have enrolled in Xiamen.

There are two international schools in this coastal district that the Chinese government has transformed into an industrial zone.

$4,000

One such institution, the Manila-Xiamen International School (MXIS), has been home to children trying to dodge abduction. A year's education in the school costs about $4,000, not counting board and lodging expenses.

MXIS assistant administrator Celso Jalac said the school was founded by Mildred Go and her Palawan-based husband Roman Go in 1993, "just when there was a rash of kidnappings in Manila."

Jalac spoke of the case of a 13-year-old Chinese-Filipino who enrolled in the school after being released by his abductors.

"We were able to restore his self-confidence after that traumatic experience," Jalac said, adding that the boy had spent more than 10 months in captivity.

The boy is now an engineering student in Manila, he said.

Jalac, a native of Marinduque province, started his professional career as a mechanical engineer. Eventually he found himself in the teaching profession under the guidance of Mildred Go.

The MXIS offers kindergarten, elementary and high school education to children of expatriates and overseas Chinese investors.

It also has a summer program for Chinese-Filipino students wishing to learn Mandarin.

"Our enrolment has been steadily growing," said Jalac.

The MXIS is recognized by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports in the Philippines.

Jalac noted that in his seven years with the MXIS, most of those who topped the graduating classes had been Chinese-Filipinos.

He cited the performance of Batch 2001's Irene Corazon Teh, who holds the distinction of being the school's first valedictorian and who bagged most of the awards in this year's commencement exercises.

Teh is now on full scholarship as a freshman at the University of Asia and the Pacific, after earning the highest possible rank of 99 percent in the National Secondary Achievement Test.

Family atmosphere

According to Jalac, students whose parents are not in Xiamen, like the Chinese-Filipinos who have been sent away for their safety, find surrogates in the parents of their classmates.

"That is why we are able to keep an atmosphere of family here. Children are always with their parents, natural or not," he said.

Students not staying with their parents are housed in a dormitory in the school compound squared off by four-story buildings.

More importantly, a perimeter fence secures the compound.

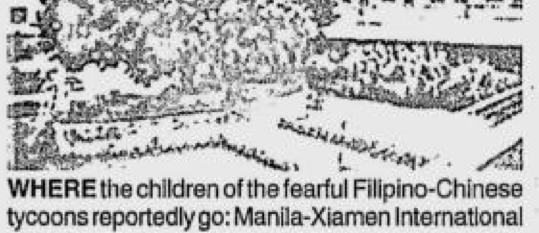
Indeed, it is peace of mind that Chinese-Filipino parents are paying for.

And because Xiamen has extensive telecommunication facilities and is only an hour and a half away from Manila by plane, their children are within easy reach.

Xiamen also has the same climate as most Philippine cities, saving the parents the worry that their children may be finding it difficult to adjust to the new environment.

An examination of the roster of Chinese-Filipinos enrolled at the MXIS showed the majority from Metro Manila and a number from Tarlac and the Visayas.

For schoolyear 2000-2001, 11 Filipinos were among the 24-member faculty. Jalac said four more Filipinos had been hired this year. "Although they have just finished college, we took them in. It is the Filipino heart for compassion and care that we look for in our teachers," Jalac said.



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PDI

Economic rebound seen

(From page A1)

Sabdani, Javier Sampang and Saltinar Sali, who were arrested along with Global in Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City, told government authorities about the cache during tactical interrogation.

Chief Supt. Manuel Raval, police chief for Central Mindanao, said Global's group left the firearms in a nearby area so they could easily retrieve these when needed.

Global and his men withdrew to the South Cotabato-Sarangani-General Santos area after the foiled raid at the Barcelo Pearl Farm Beach Resort in the Island Garden City of Samal on May 22, Raval said.

GMA's promise

Concepcion said that at the recent Tripartite Industrial Peace Council meeting, businessmen appealed to the President to prod the military and police to make a major breakthrough in the kidnapping crises in Metro Manila and parts of Mindanao.

He quoted the President as saying that peace and security problems were her top priority and that she hoped to resolve these within 90 days.

He said businessmen applauded her decision to revamp the PNP and AFP and to name a crisis manager for peace and order.

Concepcion said that once these issues were resolved, the economy would be likely to turn the corner within the next six months.

"We can't have more bad news on top of what we already have," he said.

He also said the economy was primed for a rebound because manufacturers had pared their inventory levels to the bare minimum, and any improvement in demand would immediately translate to increased production and more employment.

In his case, Concepcion said, his white appliance business was now down to a 15-day inventory, as against the normal 75-day inventory.

He said a possible increase in oil prices was the only major threat to recovery, but that this would only happen if the crude oil did not exceed $25 a barrel and the peso did not fall below P52.90:$1.

Magsino

In General Santos, media practitioners are preparing a manifesto calling for the relief of Col. Pedrito Magsino, commander of the 601st Brigade, for supposedly preventing them from interviewing and taking photographs of Global.

Magsino had been criticized on local radio and in print since Monday, when he whisked Global off to Manila.

Joseph Jubelag, president of the Central Mindanao PNP Press Corps, told the INQUIRER that Magsino, General Santos Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. and Raval had promised to present Global at the Monday news conference at Camp Fermin G. Lira.

Magsino, however, took Global with him and proceeded to the airport despite pleadings from the mayor and local police officials, Jubelag said.

Intelligence agents of the police and the Nica were said to have worked for the issuance of the search warrant that led to Global's capture.

But it was only after the tactical interrogation, when it was learned that Global was among those captured, that Magsino insisted on taking custody of the Abu Sayyaf leader.

The police and military reportedly had a heated argument Sunday evening, when Magsino insisted that the Army should take custody of Global.

He said Global would be more secured at the Army camp.

Acharon and local police officials retorted that Global was safe in Camp Fermin G. Lira and that he should be detained there.

"Commander Global (is of) national and international concern. He is a high-risk passenger, so he was immediately brought to Manila on orders from higher authorities," Magsino said later.

Global, who has a P5-million prize on his head, is believed responsible for the abduction of mostly European tourists last year from the Malaysian island of Sipadan.

He was presented to the media at the Army base in Fort Bonifacio, Makati City, yesterday afternoon.

Interrogation

In Manila, Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Jose Mabanta Jr. said Global was being interrogated by military intelligence officers.

Army chief Lt. Gen. Jaime de los Santos said "all angles" concerning Filipino hostage Roland Ullah would be asked of Global.

Ullah is the last of the Sipadan hostages still in Abu Sayyaf hands.

It is not known if he is still alive, if he has joined the bandit group, or if he was a co-conspirator in the raid on Sipadan on April 23, 2000.

"We will dwell on that," De los Santos said. "We will ask Commander Global about the status of Ullah: whether he was a mere captive or a co-conspirator."

Ullah was a diving instructor at Sipadan at the time of the raid. His family earlier assailed the government for not giving sufficient attention to his release.

"Ullah is considered a hostage unless information indicates otherwise," Mabanta said..

Global served as spokesperson for the Abu Sayyaf during the five-month hostage crisis wherein at least P500 million in ransom money allegedly changed hands.

Among the other issues that the intelligence officers want to cover in Global's interrogation are the Abu Sayyaf's structure and hierarchy, manpower and firepower, funding and local networks, and international links.

Agence France Presse quoted AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan as saying that Global's arrest would give the authorities a clearer understanding of the Abu Sayyaf's operations and help foil further "terrorist" action.

"There are names coming out, their structure is becoming more clear, their hierarchy, their chain of command, their future plans and their motivations," Adan said, adding:

"Some of the things we knew. They planned to conduct terrorist activities, like bombings. We knew about that and we were ready for that.

"And their plan was to go to some tourist spots. It is a good thing that this was foiled with the arrest of this top commander."

Justice system

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate panel on national security and defense, said Global's capture would test the government's policy to defer the execution of people who had committed heinous crimes including kidnapping.

"His capture is going to test the system of justice in this country, especially in the application of the death penalty as regards heinous crimes," Biazon said at a news briefing.

The President has voiced a preference to have the execution of criminals deferred. Her position drew criticism from anti-crime groups and approval from leaders of the Catholic Church.

Biazon said the government had no choice but to apply the law on Global.

"Remember that heinous crimes include kidnapping for ransom, and I think there might be sufficient evidence to conclude that kidnapping for ransom (by the Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao) indeed involves Global," the senator said.

Biazon, a former AFP chief of staff, also said the government should brace for the possibility that the Global's colleagues might seek a prisoner swap.

"What if (Abu Sayaff leaders Khadaffy) Janjalani and Abu Sabaya say we will release the hostages if you release Global and the three others?" Biazon said. "The government will have to prepare for this eventuality."

And this situation will again put the country's judicial system to test, he said. *With reports from Carlito Pablo and Armand Nocum in Manila; AFP*

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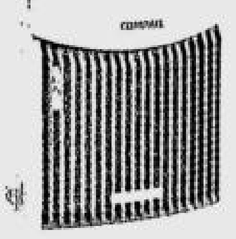
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Prize catch

EDITORIAL

THE GOVERNMENT scored a major victory in its campaign against the Abu Sayyaf with the arrest of Nadzmie Saabdulla, alias Commander Global, in General Santos City Sunday. Saabdulla, who has been tagged by the military as the Abu Sayyaf's chief of staff, was captured together with three of his men by a joint police-military force which acted on a tip given by a civilian informer. Elated by the turn of events, the administration, through Presidential Spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao, declared: "We are turning a corner now in the fight against the Abu Sayyaf."

Earlier, government agents arrested two leaders of the bandit group which gained worldwide notoriety last year when it raided a plush resort on the Malaysian island of Sipadan and abducted 21 mostly Western tourists. Abudallah Yusuf, an intelligence officer of the Abu Sayyaf, was arrested by military intelligence agents in Zamboanga City last month. Also caught last June after a shootout with policemen in Isabela, Basilan, was Jose Wong, a convert to Islam believed to be a supply officer of the bandit group. Each carried a P1-million reward on his head. However, neither comes close in importance to Saabdulla, if published reports are anything to go by.

Saabdulla, whose name may not be as familiar as, say, Abu Sabaya, seems to have the final say on major decisions as far as the Sulu faction of the Abu Sayyaf is concerned. Abu Sayyaf members say that Saabdulla usually holds his tongue while other leaders debate important issues, but when he talks everybody listens and agrees with him. In one revealing episode following the Sipadan kidnapping, Saabdullah was captured on tape virtually overruling Galib Andan, alias Commander Robot, who is generally acknowledged as the leader of the Sulu group, and telling him what to do. Other newspapers, quoting military sources, have described him as the "brains" behind the Abu Sayyaf's most daring exploits, including the Sidapan hostage-taking, the 1995 raid on Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur, and the more recent attack on another upscale resort, the Pearl Farm on Samal Island near Davao City.

In other words, Saabdulla is as big as any Abu Sayyaf leader can be. No wonder the police and the military are falling over themselves trying to get the credit for his capture. No wonder, too, that the administration is now seeing the Abu Sayyaf disintegrating after his arrest. As Tiglao put it, "We see it as another indication that the Abu Sayyaf network is gradually but surely being dismantled."

That is certainly a consummation devoutly to be wished. But perhaps it's too soon for the government to be smelling victory. Maybe because of its loose organization or maybe because it is rooted in Islamic fundamentalism, the Abu Sayyaf has shown a great capacity to absorb some very strong blows and come back stronger. If the death of its founder, Abdurajak Janjalani, didn't spell death for the organization, there is no reason to believe that the capture of its "brains"—if indeed that is what Saabdulla is—guarantees its speedy extinction.

Saabdulla's arrest shows that finally the authorities are doing things right. But it will take a few more—and bigger—successes before the government can declare that the terrible menace that is the Abu Sayyaf has been completely vanquished.

Progress?

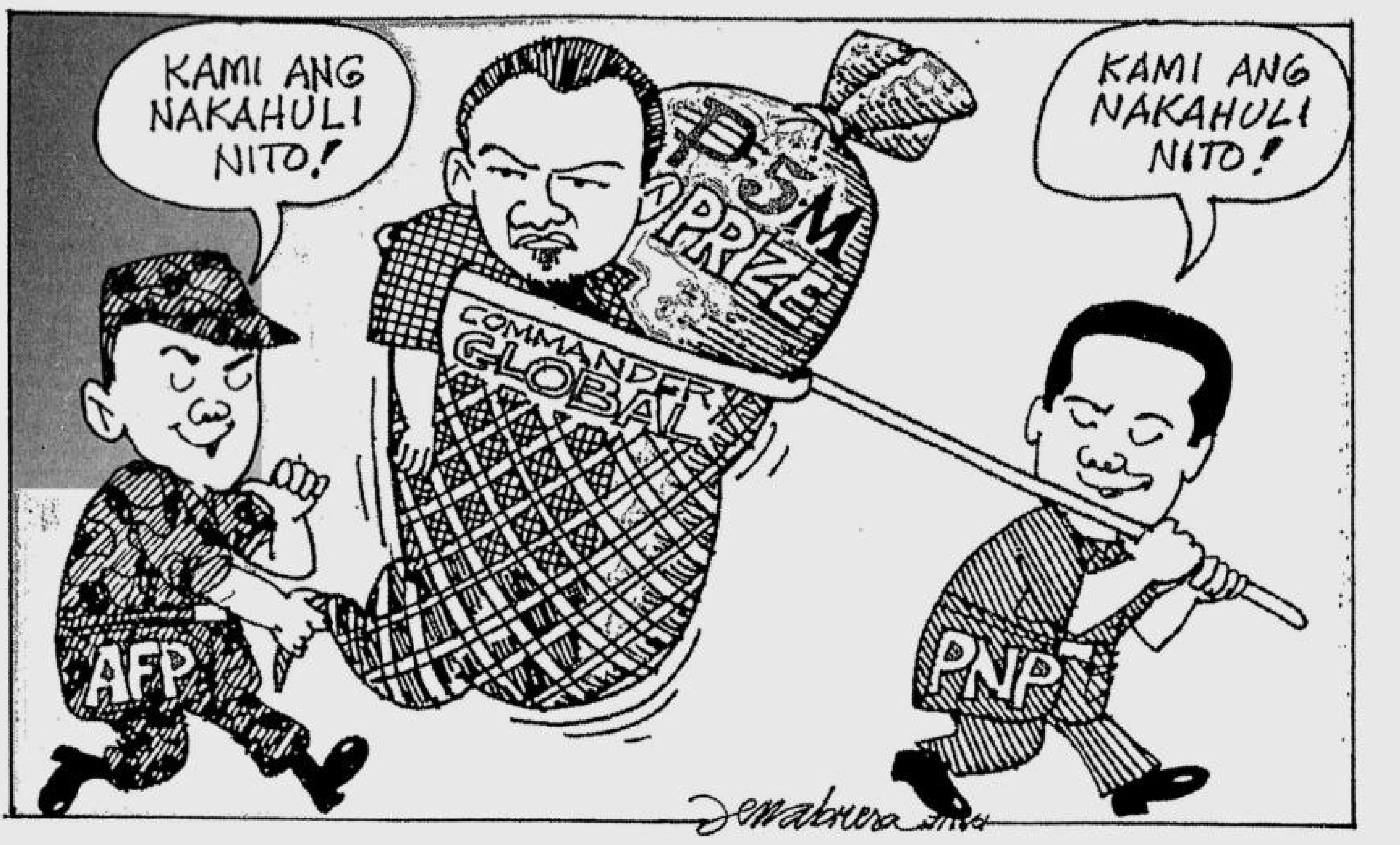
FOREIGN COMMENT

GOOD news from the land of the free. K-mart, the US discount retailer, has decided to stop selling handgun ammunition in its more than 2,000 stores. The company made the decision after filmmaker Michael Moore and three survivors of the Columbine High School shooting complained that the easy availability of ammo was contributing to the rash of mass shootings in recent years.

Granted, in most civilized countries the very idea that bullets could be displayed on store shelves along with the gummi bears, shampoo and gardening shears would seem ridiculous. It's a capital crime in Malaysia even to possess a handgun bullet. In countries where possession is legal, customers usually must have a license, or at least fill out some serious paperwork, before they can buy handgun ammunition.

But in the United States, where about 30,000 people a year are killed with firearms, almost as many as died in the Korean War, this is called progress.

The Globe and Mail (Toronto)



Who wants to be a millionaire?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I ASKED this question at the start of the Kapihan sa Manila forum last Monday. Many hands shot up. They all want to be millionaires. The problem is, very few know how to be one. The Abu Sayyaf knows how. The person who ratted on Commander Global knows how. Many politicians know how. Some police officers know how. Certain Filipino presidents know how. Bill Gates knows how. Most businessmen think they know how. But 99.99 percent of the world's population don't know how. And so the world has very few millionaires and very many poor people.

One of the two guests at the Kapihan, Social Security System Chair/President Vitaliano Nañagas II (the other was Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin) had this advice to those who want to be millionaires: "Don't join the government." This is not a very accurate advice. While the great majority of those who join the government, such as teachers and clerks, remain poor, certain smart government officials become multimillionaires. Surely, the fastest way is to be a senior official of one of the government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs). Joining one of them is like owning a gold mine. In the Government Service Insurance System, even if you're not one of the top officials, you can be an instant millionaire when you retire under the GSIS Loyalty Incentive Plan.

That is why President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was irked when she learned that her subordinates in the GOCCs and GFIs had salaries many times bigger than hers. Why are they getting much bigger salaries than her when it is she who works the hardest, has the heaviest responsibilities and gets all the blame? That's not fair. So she ordered that henceforth officials of GOCCs and GFIs shouldn't get more than double what their counterparts in the national government (undersecretaries) get. Lest the officials try to pull a fast one by giving themselves fat allowances, the presidential order made it clear that what she meant was "gross income," (not basic salary) including all allowances disguised under various names.

Secretary Boncodin told the Kapihan that during a meeting at Malacañang last week, the GOCC/GFI officials were given a July 25, 2001 deadline to come up with a scaled down pay scale. Those who think they're too good for the small pay are urged to resign, the President made it very clear. Nobody is resigning yet, so that means the reduced pay is still all right.

Instead of resigning, those in the GSIS are opting for early retirement before its Loyalty Incentive Plan is revised when it is discovered that it is nothing but theft on a grand scale ("plunder" in legal terms) disguised as a retirement plan. For under this qualified theft…er, plan, a GSIS vice president can be a multi-millionaire when he retires. He can collect as much as P20 million in lump sum plus P100,000 a month in lifetime pension. With such a nest egg, who would want to continue working when he can spend the rest of his life playing golf and traveling around the world?

During the forum, the much-maligned Nañagas made many in the audience shed tears when he revealed that many of his vice presidents get higher salaries than him. And that even under the reduced pay scale, he would still be getting less than the maximum allowed.

The public should be told that GOCC/GFI officials had not always been this greedy. Less than 10 years ago, they were not getting those atrociously high salaries. It was only during the term of President Ramos that they started abusing their powers and gave themselves huge salaries and allowances. The excuse: they should get as much as their counterparts in the private sector.

This is not justified. The private corporations are spending their own money; the government corporations are spending the people's money who get a pittance in return for their taxes and contributions while the servants they're paying are getting millions.

Somebody said that with the reduced pay, the government may not be able to get qualified people to run the government corporations. This will never happen. There are very long lines of applicants for every government position. They even use politics, pressure, padrinos, public relations, influence, sycophancy and dirty tricks to land the positions. And anyway, even with the high pay, we were not getting good executives, judging from the poor performance of the government corporations and the poor service to their members.

With the reduced pay scale, we would now be sure that those who apply do it not because of the high pay but because they really want to serve. When you ask government officials why they entered government service, they invariably answer that "they want to serve, they want to help." What they mean is that they want to serve themselves and help themselves. They want the big pay and the perks that go with the position. With the reduced pay, we don't get the hypocrites; we get only the sincere ones.

And speaking of the private sector, it is customary for its officials to volunteer pay cuts when their company has financial problems. The Philippine government is not only having financial problems; it is going bankrupt. But its highly paid officials are reluctant to forego a small part of their pay so the government they work for won't close shop.

There's the difference.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

What leaders?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MY favorite story is that of Bill Begg, who died many years ago in the early 1970s after going to the hills to fight Marcos. Bill was a seminarian who studied at the Ateneo, where we were classmates in the Greek classics. As a seminarian, he was exempt from the Reserve Officers Training Corps, a privilege the rest of us found monumentally enviable. I kept wishing I had enrolled in the seminary myself, if only for that. I could not imagine a worse punishment in the seminary comparable to the ROTC.

But Bill eventually gravitated toward activism, in spite of or because of the Greek classics, and left the seminary. I saw him less and less in the campus, until he dropped out of sight altogether. I would learn later that his convictions drove him to opt for something more than protesting "clerico-fascism" and the many ills of society at the time. He opted to take up arms.

His taking up arms, however, took a curious turn. Having very little knowledge of how to use firearms, he enrolled at the ROTC, probably the only youth in the entire country, or the entire world, to have done so willingly. There he learned to assemble and disassemble the Garand, and a few pointers about military tactics. Having bled the course for all that it was worth, he disappeared without waiting for his grade.

I don't know whether the knowledge served him in good stead. He died a couple of years later, after heroically staying behind during an encounter to allow his comrades to escape.

None of the above is to suggest that the ROTC has any virtues whatsoever. All of the above is to suggest that when people are motivated, they will go to great lengths to learn something. Even go to the extent of joining the ROTC. It is the desire to fight for country and not a cursory knowledge of fighting that will make Filipinos defend the country when the time comes. There is no basis for the belief that the ROTC offers military preparedness, which should be invaluable when the country is threatened with invasion.

Since I got back, I've seen on TV protesting students camping out in school sites and vowing not to abandon them until the ROTC is abolished. I've gotten letters as well from many youths telling me of their ordeal and arguing passionately for the abolition of the course. My heart goes out to them.

I never took up the ROTC. I attended it a couple of times in college, and dropped out forthwith, convinced my sanity would not survive it. The fellow who headed our unit was a Jekyll-and-Hyde type, a candidate for the Mandaluyong Mental Hospital. I used to see him in freshman English class, a big surly person, who kept quiet for reasons that did not owe to internal fortitude. He simply did not know what the hell the teacher was talking about. His mind was always elsewhere, I did not figure it was in the august halls of Parnassus. One might even say he was timid, except that he wasn't timid enough not to steal glances at his seatmate's pad paper during quizzes.

On the field, however, early on Saturday mornings, while the smell of grass and dew wafted in the air, he metamorphosed into something else. Suddenly, gone was the quiet person who sat by the corner, only the surliness remained. He glowered and shouted at the cadets, many of whom, like me, had just come from the province, lugging behind frail constitutions and even frailer egos. I do not remember his name now; Freud must be right about our monumental capacity to bury the most unpleasant things in mounds of forgetfulness. I do recall that he reveled in his power over us, it was written in his face plain as day. And he was pleased as punch each time his own superior commended him for a job well done. The swastika did not leap in my brain, what did was the face of a bully from elementary school. He had the same servile attitude to patent superiors and gleeful malice toward presumed inferiors.

It got so I dreaded the march of Saturday, the one day in the week the rest of the world prized like water in the desert. If that was their concept of instilling character in me, I thought, they could have it. I personally could not reconcile why we were trying to improve our minds in libraries and debase them in the fields. The guy that used to oppress us was by no means the exception, he was every means the rule.

I remembered this when I read the other day the letter of Jorge Lucero, a fellow who describes himself as a 45-year-old enlisted reservist of the NCR-Regional Community Defense Group. He defends the ROTC by saying among other things that, "In the ROTC, cadets are trained to be the future leaders, because it develops strong, disciplined, courteous and law abiding citizens." I do not know which ROTC he is talking about, it bears little resemblance to the ROTC most everybody else knows. Most everybody else at least who has been at the other end of the cursing and the "Wipe that smile from your face, gademit." Lucero wants to know if the people who are opposing the ROTC "belong to the weaker sex." I rest my case. If that comment is a sign of the leadership, strong character, disciplined thinking and courteousness you get from the ROTC, they can have it anytime.

Dr. Edmundo Nolasco says the ROTC produced some very good soldiers who fought the Japanese during the Japanese Occupation. True, but he talks of another time and another world. During the prewar years, the Philippine Constabulary and local police also produced some fine professionals. That is not a reason to trust the PNP today, or indeed to not wish it to be abolished too.

The defense of country is a function of passion, not ignorance. The defense of country is a function of love of country, not blind obedience. The defense of country is a function of enlightenment, not befuddlement. I should think this country would be safer with people who will defend it to death because they love it than with people who will defend it to half-life out of fear of petty tyrants.

Marcos' efforts to militarize the institutions of society—including the police—not too far behind us, indeed with all its effects patently all around us, not least the promotion of torturers to generals and key government posts, the country would profit not just from abolishing the ROTC but from introducing a course in human rights in college. Including the PMA and the Defense College, which are the most badly in need of it. Otherwise, we would be foolish worrying about invaders overrunning this country.

When the real threat are the invaders in the guise of this country's protectors.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@ vasia.com

Grand Old Dame to 'comfort woman'

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE MANILA TIMES, the "Grand Old Dame" of the pre-martial law press, has changed ownership several times since its revival during the 1986 People Power Revolution.

The new owner, Dante Ang, claims he has been a "publicist" of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. I am not sure what "publicist" means in the Philippine information industry—i.e., whether it is a cosmetic phrase for PR. What I know is that Bubby Dacer, who was kidnapped at the height of the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada and now confirmed dead, has also been described as a "publicist."

After its rebirth at Edsa I and a short-lived bid to revive its glory, the Roces family (the Ramon Roces wing) sold the paper to John Gokongwei. Estrada bludgeoned the paper with a libel case and implicit threats of other forms of retaliation, after it published a story saying that Estrada was an "unwitting godfather" of an allegedly irregular deal. The Gokongweis were so terrorized by this demonstration of presidential retaliatory power that they sold it to Reghis Romero. According to newspaper industry sources, Romero was fronting for Estrada crony Mark Jimenez.

Eventually, Jimenez came out to own control of the paper before the elections. It is not clear whether ownership of the Times helped him at all in his bid for Congress in the sixth district of Manila. What is clear is that the Times did not pay the salaries of its employees—although Jimenez is known to have spent generously to win the election. The new owner, Ang, is reported to have assumed the responsibility of paying Jimenez's debts to the Times staff, and this is one of the more positive aspects of the acquisition. Newspapers have no reason to publish if they can't attend to the basic responsibility of private enterprise—pay the wages of people who sweat blood to make the industry run.

Under Jimenez's control, the Times became a kept newspaper, presenting sunshine news for the Estrada administration and abandoning the fundamental adversarial role of the press as a critic of society and of government.

Ang is also identified as chair of the board of the sequestered RPN 9, director of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Board, and publisher of Kabayan (which should not be associated with Sen. Noli de Castro's logo in ABS-CBN), a Filipino-language broadsheet. His acquisition of the Times expands his base in the newspaper industry.

Ang has not only claimed closeness with President Macapagal but has also made startling statements about the purpose of his acquisition of the Times.

In what seems to be a policy statement to confirm his takeover, Ang said that the "new" Manila Times "will not be pro-administration but pro-Gloria." He also said that from Day One, the Times would speak on behalf of Gloria. "In the Philippines, which paper has no bias? So we will not hide ours," he said.

These statements nearly made me choke. Where he picked up the arrant nonsense that President Macapagal and her administration can be separated by a wall is beyond me. It would seem therefore that the main reason for publishing the "new" Times is to serve as a sycophant for her personal glorification. On the question of bias, Ang even stumbles into quicksand when he talks about bias. The "bias" that papers, which have enough respect for their function in a democracy, and journalists, who have enough self-respect is the bias on behalf of the larger public interest—not a bias for a president or an administration.

Obviously Ang is introducing a new concept in newspaper publishing. Whether this concept will ensure the revival of the Times, let alone its survival, remains to be seen. The test of its survival is to be determined by whether the public finds it credible and independent enough as a mouthpiece of the public interest.

Ang's notions of sycophancy do not make it any better than those of Jimenez. Indeed, the Times' changeover is merely a transfer of control from one sycophant (of Estrada) to another (of Macapagal).

To use a metaphor, the Times has metamorphosed from the status of having been the illustrious, independent Manila Times that was the gadfly of society and government during the pre-martial law days to that of a "comfort woman" for the Estrada administration and now the Macapagal administration.

Whether the "new" Times, with its stated policy, would help the Macapagal administration at all is problematic. President Macapagal enjoys today a more sympathetic press than Estrada did, and the reason for this is that she has delivered better governance than her predecessor. True, she undergoes critical scrutiny from the press, but it's her performance that gives her a relatively less critical press.

The ultimate test for the Macapagal administration's effort to win public opinion to its side is its performance—not the press that aims to be singing praises which she does not deserve. Her strength lies not on publicists who take control of newspapers proclaimed to be "biased for Gloria."

If she is not doing her job well, a hundred "Times" and protective "publicists" won't help her survive until 2004. The lessons derived from the Estrada presidency in his relationship with the press should be instructive.

Estrada had the overwhelming support of the AM radio, nationwide, and government TV for propaganda, and had a sympathetic group of TV commentators, as well as a raft of pro-Estrada smaller newspapers, flooding the country with his messages. But this magnification of pro-Estrada information did not save him from being deposed.

President Macapagal does not need the Times or Ang. She can stand on her own record. The obvious beneficiary of the Times' acquisition is Ang himself—it creates an illusion that he can influence public opinion.

How to help

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IN THE COLUMN on "Murder by mother," I said that the myth and ideology of the maternal instinct and the all-knowing, all-powerful madonna only served to prevent society from realizing and acknowledging that mothers need help in the vital work that they do of raising children.

That column was triggered by two recent cases of murderous mothers. One was Andrea Yates, a mother of five in the United States who drowned her four boys and infant girl in the bathtub. Closer to home was Rosalina Sabala, a mother of three boys, who, in an apparent suicide attempt, ingested cleaning fluid laced with cyanide, then had the boys drink the same fluid. She then brought her children to the mall where her husband works, apparently to publicly embarrass him. Inside her handbag was a letter addressed to her husband accusing him of having an affair with another woman.

Of course, not all mothers are driven to such straits by the pressures of child-rearing (and philandering spouses) that they end up killing themselves and/or their children. But maybe these mothers, as well as those of the estimated 200 children killed each year by their mothers (it isn't clear whether this is a global figure or for the United States alone), can serve as cautionary tales. This is what happens when we ignore mothers and assume that every woman who bears or raises a child has an unlimited supply of the time, resources, emotional and physical stamina, patience, wisdom and humor necessary to raise children into healthy adults.

Or assume that the work of child-rearing is the work of the mother alone.

* * *

TO THIS assumption child advocates, including US Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, retort with the African saying: "It takes a village to raise a child."

Yates was said to be suffering from "post-partum psychosis," an extreme form of post-partum depression which many mothers experience after giving birth. Reading accounts of her state of mind before she killed her children, I wondered if wider spacing between pregnancies, enough time for her to fully recover from the "blues" before getting pregnant again and starting the arduous work of caring for another infant, could not have prevented the tragedy. She and her husband, it was reported, wanted to have a large family. But they didn't have to have all of their children so close together. If, instead of anti-depressants she had relied on contraception for relief, would the killings not have taken place?

I could also imagine the bedlam and chaos of the Yates home, what with five children, all age 7 and below, constantly underfoot. A recent "Oprah" show tackled the "time bombs" that lurk inside the bodies of stressed-out single mothers of very young children. With constant demands on their energy, attention and time, the women were suffering from migraine, high blood pressure and shortness of breath, but couldn't spare the time to consult a doctor. After a feature on one such harried young mother, the irrepressible Oprah Winfrey exclaimed: "What can we do for her? Give her a housekeeper!"

* * *

THE FIRST thing we, as a society, can do to help mothers in their work of raising children is to admit that mothers can't do it all by themselves. About the most cruel irony to emerge out of the women's movement in the past decades is that, having convinced women that they, too belong in the world of production (or work outside the home), society continued to insist that the world of reproduction (the "work" of bearing and rearing children and looking after the family) was theirs alone.

Don't you wonder sometimes why women are so angry? Why, it's like we took a rock and started to hit ourselves with it!

The answer to the injustice of the "double burden" is not to isolate women from the world outside the home. Rather, it is to get men to enter the world and work of reproduction, too. I don't know if getting Yates' husband, an engineer at the Nasa, to help out more with the children would have helped his wife out of her psychosis. But a little "time off" from her brood of five would undoubtedly have helped ease some of the pressure from Andrea.

Not every mother can afford paid help, and even upper- and middle-class Filipinas, who used to take *yayas* for granted, are discovering that finding, and keeping, good help has gotten increasingly more difficult. Day care seems to be an obvious solution, but so many segments of society still seem to think it's a luxury in a poor country like ours. On the contrary. With so many mothers desperate to find work to feed their children, good quality day care is a necessity for both mothers and children.

* * *

IT'S rather more difficult to find practical policy implications in Rosalina Sabala's case. Her "madness," on the surface, seems to have been triggered more by jealousy and obsession than depression and stress arising from the burdens of motherhood.

You have to wonder, though, why she felt leaving this life and taking her sons with her was preferable to losing her husband to another woman.

Could it be that her sense of identity was so tied up with being "his" wife and the mother of "his" children that she felt his leaving her would be the "death" of her?

I don't know if we can legislate that all husbands love their wives and children unconditionally and remain faithful to their vows. But in the absence of a divorce law in this country, it's a reality that husbands, more than wives, enjoy more leeway in terms of exploring other relationships. That some mothers are driven to seek revenge by killing themselves and their children seems the starkest testament to their lack of power and choices.

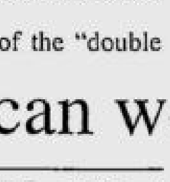
* * *

Comments are welcome at rjdavid@ inquirer. com.ph

What photographs can we print?

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



LAST Sunday our Lifestyle editors had to explain to some irate readers why, a week earlier, they allowed Tim Yap to run a colored photograph of two gay men kissing. Can there be no other explanation except that the photograph was taken on Gay Pride Day, and that kissing is but part of an intimate relationship—gay, straight, lesbian, or bisexual? Some readers even suspected a gay agenda when there was none.

On Monday, both the editorial and the column of the Reader's Advocate explained the debate our editors went through when they published the front-page photograph of the kidnapped British national whose ear was snipped off with scissors to speed up the payment of a reported P10-million ransom. The photograph, reproduced from a videotape sent to the victim's family, made my stomach turn and I cannot imagine how distressing viewing the actual footage would be. We know that kidnapping goes on but we do not mind unless it happens to us or someone we know. That photograph clearly illustrated how brutal a business kidnapping can be. Was it news? Was the INQUIRER used? Should we have published the picture or not? Is it a picture you want to see while eating breakfast? That debate goes on every day when the editors choose what to print on Page 1. I presume much thought goes into the choice of Page 1 photos—it's not done on whim.

Disturbing photographs once got me into trouble and these were taken during the Filipino-American War. Early in my career I illustrated a July 4 feature with photographs of dead Filipino soldiers piled one on top of another in trenches. If that was not enough, I used another photo showing Filipinos digging a shallow grave for their dead comrades. At the center of this photograph was a group of smiling American soldiers posing by the dead as if they were trophies of a fox hunt. Some readers who carried fond memories of American GIs returning with Gen. Douglas MacArthur to liberate the Philippines from the Japanese in 1945 were shocked. What was the point of printing these? Was the author a communist? Could I prove that the dead Filipinos were killed by Americans? It was one thing to read about the Filipino-American War and quite a different experience to see actual photographs.

For want of a clear reproduction quality print I could not use a faded photograph of the infamous "water cure." This photograph had American soldiers interrogating a "insurrecto" by holding him down and pouring water into his nose. Later a stick was placed in his mouth to keep it open, the better to pour a whole pail of water in and simulate the experience of drowning on dry land. The worst part of this exercise is when one or two of the soldiers jumped on the victim's bloated stomach forcing the water out of the mouth, nose and, sometimes, the ears! Naturally, reading about the "water cure" and seeing a photograph were two separate but complementary things.

Of course, cruelty was not a monopoly of the Americans, the Spaniards had their own form of terror, the most famous being the garrote made famous by Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora in 1872. This contraption had a seat of wood and a metal clamp that people presume snuffs the life out of victims in a slow and agonizing death. Contrary to popular belief, the garrote is more humane than it looks. The metal crossbar was placed snugly on the neck of the victim and with one quick twist, the executioner broke the collarbone, producing instant death. As we know from historical accounts, execution by decapitation was not efficient, especially if the blade is dull or worse, if the executioner misses the mark and has to chop off the head with a second blow. Same thing with a firing squad, when bullets miss the mark, the poor wounded victim has to be shot again—and again if they miss—till he or she dies. The garrote, as shown in American-period postcards, was meant to contrast evil Spain as compared to those bringing so-called "Benevolent Assimilation." While photos of the garrote during the American period were staged and harmless, we have one photograph of a real execution that has been made into a limited edition print by Bencab whose works remain in great demand even if they tackle death by garrote.

Nobody is bothered by the photographs of Jose Rizal's execution because there is no blood and gore here. Surely, some will be distressed by the pictures of Rizal's mother Teodora Alonso or his brother Paciano taken from an open coffin.

How do we determine what to print? What about pictures of Japanese atrocities during the World War II? We have heard all the stories, but there are no photographs in our textbooks despite availability of hundreds of photographs taken after the war to document war crimes. What about more recent history? How would our editors decide on the pictures of Ninoy Aquino assassinated on the tarmac of the airport that now bears his name? Photographs of Ninoy's bloodied corpse said more than reams of text at a time when the press was controlled by Ferdinand Marcos. What is fit to print is a question that will be asked as long as we have newspapers and books.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu. edu.ph

Keeping fit

THEY say it comes with age—this waking up in the wee hours of the morning way, way before the sun comes up. I remember my younger years when my children had to literally shove me out of bed at 7 a.m. so they wouldn't be late for school (I doubled as their menial driver). At that hour, I would be deliciously ensconced still in the arms of Orpheus. But now at 4:30 a.m., or even earlier, even before the cocks crow, my eyes flip open and going back to sleep is next to impossible with so many images and thoughts coming unbidden. Since cocks are virtually non-existent in the city to wake one up, it's the drone of airplanes (I live near the airport) on early morning flights that insinuates itself into my consciousness. Before long, my senses are fully awake.

HIGH BLOOD

Violeta Narvas-Santos

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. **—Ed.**

What to do when no one else is stirring, not even a cockroach? Read? Meditate? Reminisce? But then before you know it, your peace of mind is gone as worries and anxieties crowd out the pleasant imaginings. So instead of presiding over a battle between sad and happy thoughts, with the former usually winning, it is better to just bound out of bed.

So, what else to do? Read! But an annoyed groan from the hubby's side of the bed (the light disturbs him) squelches the idea. Why not go jogging, the idea strikes. But after a while it gets boring looking after the same scenery morning after morning. Then a totally unexpected comment made by my granddaughter triggered an idea. She, eyeing my bulging tummy, in all innocence asked, "When are you going to have the baby, Nanay?" Embarrassing to say the least, but it provided me with a brilliant alternative. With time on my hands, why not join an aerobics class and enjoy exercising in the company of other shape-challenged creatures? So off to a slimnastics class I decided to go. So now when the planes start droning, I quietly slip out of bed, don my aerobics outfit, put on my rubber shoes, grab my gym bag and slip out of the house even when the maids are not yet stirring.

Looking up at the sky, I see the dawn is just beginning and the sight of it is truly inspiring—soft pastel colors of pale pink, tinges of blue with touches of gold are seemingly finger-painted on the canvass of the sky by a still drowsy morning sun. I would imagine the sight would send the hidden artist in us to heights of ecstatic awe.

Outside the village grounds, I am greeted by the sights and sounds of early dawn. Idling busses are waiting for early passengers. I run smack into child labor in the raw by way of a young child peddling rags when he should still be in bed luxuriating in sleep that will make him grow. I see *taho* vendors catering to workers whose only breakfast would be a glass of this concoction; vendors of boiled eggs, bread and cheap foodstuff that would line their "*masa*" customers' stomachs for the rest of the day. I see a newspaper vendor on a bike precariously balancing a tall pile of newspapers in the front and back. How he can still manage to find his way, craning his neck above the pile, is beyond me.

At this hour, no traffic policeman is yet around, so it's every man for himself. A green or red light doesn't stand for anything and it's open invitation for near hits and misses. Still, traffic is heavenly. Traffic build-up has not yet started, pollution level is at a minimum, and by dint of luck and skillful dodging, I reach the aerobics place in one piece.

Let me let you in now on the goings-on inside a gym club.

When you come early, you write your name on a clipboard where there is a diagram of the time slot and kind of machine you want to use. This may have been devised to ensure fairness, and to enforce the first-come-first-served basis. But Pinays will be Pinays and even here there's "*palusot.*" Somebody who comes early signs up for her friends who'll be coming later. This has been the cause of disagreements—and leads not only to "*taltalan*" but at times escalates to "*sabunotan.*"

The gym I go to is well-equipped. There are the usual stationary bikes for the warm-ups, the regulatory treadmills, the more strenuous transport machine and other contraptions designed to work out specific sets of muscles, to develop strength, or firm them up the thighs—both inner and outer, the hips, shoulders, arms, legs, waist, abdomen, the calves, the back, biceps and the deltoids (betcha, you don't know what that is) depending on what part of your body needs sculpting. You may avail of a personal trainor if you are willing to cough up his fee.

Some overdo the workouts and their painful grimaces would not exactly make a good advertisement for taking up gymnastics.

To complement these "instruments of torture," there are aerobic exercises held in a wide spacious hall not unlike a dancing hall. Numbers are printed on the floor to mark off one's place. Here in the most unlikely place, character and breeding become evident. While some stay in their designated places there are the inconsiderate and thoughtless ones who encroach on the space of others and elbow them out. One has to deftly dodge to avoid being hit. Most keep to their own area, however.

An instructor leads you through a routine of leaps, lunges, twirls and turns guaranteed to really rev up one's sweat glands. You go through this routine for an hour—it starts slowly, then gradually the tempo becomes faster and faster until the movements as well as the accompanying music become really frenzied. The catch is, you should not only know how to follow steps, you must come equipped with a sense of rhythm and timing if you want to move in unison with the group. It literally becomes a survival of the fittest. The weak ones fall by the wayside and crest-fallen, leave the area. The survivors are left sweating, panting and breathless.

Since a common problem is bulging abdomens, a special 15-minute workout is designed just for this and the strenuous bending, reaching and stretching are enough to make one who is not determined enough to just throw up her hand, give up and say—the heck with my figure! My resolve is stronger, I just grit my teeth and endure the torture to the breathless end.

A period of these exercises develops one's stamina and endurance and modesty aside, because I've been at it for some time now, from the corner of my eye I see young people half my age try to go through the whole routine because they're embarrassed not being able to keep up with an oldie like me.

Aerobics is an hour's routine broken only by an occasional water break. A swig from a bottle of mineral water, or Gatorade or the fountain refreshes you and fortifies you for another round. This hour of aerobic twisting and fuming may leave you huffing and puffing but these exertions are devised to burn excess calories and bring out a fitter you. And the later cooling-down phase of stretching is so relaxing the previous exertions seem to never have been.

A word about the trainors. Not like the oft-mentioned barbers with long hair or architects without houses or dentists with poor teeth, instructors are exactly what you'd expect them to be—light, lithe and lissome, brimming with vim, vigor and vitality.

The male instructors have glistening, rippling muscles. It would not be surprising if some susceptible female clients develop a crush on them. The clients come in all shapes and sizes; they display the latest in exercise wear—the skimpiest of tangas, the narrowest of thongs, the shortest of spandex shorts, and two-piece ensembles with the more bold exposing their navels. Men are not as vain—they wear ordinary T-shirts printed with exotic vacation places like Boracay, the company they work for like Heineken Beer, or the team they're—playing like Abrogar No. 10, the school they go to, like La Salle, cartoon characters like Big Bird, etc.

And the footwear! The rubber shoes are in the four-figure category like Adidas, Nike, Fila, but Korea's Reebok beats 'em all.

The final and welcome phase of these exertions is the shower. A hot/cold splash on a sweaty body is a heavenly sensation. One can almost feel not only the grime and dirt, but toxic substances from within washed out of you. It leaves you feeling clean and refreshed, ready to face the world.

With this almost daily regimen, the good effects are becoming evident I feel good because of improved blood circulation they say, and the slow metabolism of middle age that leaves a flab here and there is counterbalanced and I feel my muscles grow firmer and stronger.

Truly, I feel bouncy and more alive!

Now, waking up in the wee hours of the morning no longer makes me panicky because I look forward excitedly to another day of dynamic exercising. Why don't you try it, too?

Violeta Narvas-Santos is in her 60s and a grandmother to three cute grandchildren.

LETTERS

Corrupt and faulty logic, besides

DURING the last elections, many again chose celebrity status as primary basis in their selection of politicians to serve under the new regime. Hence, the politically inexperienced Noli de Castro, a veteran media man, topped the senatorial slate in votes garnered while the young and also inexperienced Francis Pangilinan (megastar Sharon Cuneta's husband), and Richard Gomez, a popular actor, posted good showings. Also elected but just as inexperienced in public governance were Panfilo Lacson and Loi Ejercito while names like Wigberto Tañada, Winnie Monsod, Ernesto Herrera, Obet Pagdanganan, Perfecto Yasay and Liwayway Chato with good records in public service were at the bottom of the heap.

Apparently, the true meaning of the term "greater good of the people" still escapes us as a nation. The fanaticism over celebrities that swept the celebrated former movie star, Joseph Estrada, to the presidency is still alive and a force to be reckoned with in future choices for public elective officials.

When a foreigner blamed our "damaged culture" for our country's woes, there were protests from all quarters. The result of the last elections also gave evidence of a continually regressing political history so that now, the standard for public service has reached rock bottom. Despite the total vigilance of mass media after the Marcos regime, graft and corruption was not abated up until the Estrada regime.

Fr. Larry Faraon, in his latest published views, was more concerned about the shame and ignominy Estrada actually brought on himself than he was about the serious setbacks suffered by 76 million other Filipinos because of the ineptness and corruption of his regime. He also wants our spiritual and moral values to be highly personalized to fit Estrada's claim of total innocence even in his private life. The former president now in jail is being repackaged as a martyr to allow him to get more sympathy than the condemnation he deserves for his crimes.

To downplay the tremendous success of Lee Kuan Yew in creating a peaceful, clean, environmentally friendly and economically stable state for his people, our politicians often claim his country is small and easy to manage. But our bigger land area and greater natural resources should make us as progressive, if not more than, Singapore. The Singaporean government has also been criticized for being too harsh on offenders. We would rather that even those who made our laws or must implement them, disobey them blatantly than be deemed curtailing personal freedom.

After a month's stay in Singapore, it doesn't make sense that our government which persists on being outrageously corrupt and has nothing to show for being in power, should now depend on remittances from overworked, underpaid, highly exploited, mostly poor overseas workers to prop it up. More than just a damaged culture, where is plain logic here?—**MARY JOAN A. ANGELES, 6 Pinto St., Rancho Estate I, Marikina City**

Real issues in race for speakership

THE RACE for the speakership of the 12th Congress has been muddled so that the real issues—vision, parliamentary expertise and leadership—have taken a backseat to the black propaganda branding the leading contender, Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr., as a "*trapo.*"

With all due respect to his rivals, Speaker De Venecia steered the 9th and 10th Congresses to legislate the Social Reform Agenda in support of President Fidel V. Ramos' goals of building the infrastructure of our economy toward the 21st century. He pursued anti-monopoly and socio-economic reforms, benefiting not only small and medium businesses but also the marginalized sectors of our society.

As a tireless legislator seeking peace for the nation, he initiated and brokered ceasefire agreements with the NDF-CPP-NPA and the RAM-YOU military rebels as well as a peace pact with the Muslim rebels that brought chair Nur Misuari and the Moro National Liberation Front back into the fold of the law.

Today, De Venecia heads the Asian Christian and Muslim democrats as vice president of the Christian Democrat International (CDI), an umbrella organization of all Christian democratic political parties all over the world of which the Lakas NUCD-UMDP is an active member. He also chairs the Lakas NUCD-UMDP.

Therefore, I would say that as a seasoned politician, a brilliant parliamentarian and a man of vision, the 12th Congress, will be in the best hands under De Venecia. He alone can ably deliver the necessary legislation in support of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's pro-people and democratic program of government.—**BOBBY BRILLANTE, secretary general, Kilusan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino, 175 Kalayaan Ave., West Rembo, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City**

Retirees keeping watch over SSS, GSIS fund use

THE PHILIPPINE Association of Retired Persons (PARP), is a national organization of retired Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System members. Apart from working for the improvement of retirement benefits, it watches over the investment activities of the GSIS and SSS. During the Estrada administration, the PARP was the first to protest certain investments where the two systems lost several millions of their trust funds. Because of the complicity of fund administrators, the PARP was unable to stem the losses. In this connection, we did propose that a PARP representative be appointed to the boards of the GSIS and SSS.

We hail President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's order freezing the salaries of, among others, the officers of the GSIS and SSS at their present level and disallowing any increases. In 1999, we questioned the increase of P898.1 million in the salaries of SSS personnel but Carlos Arellano then (and Horacio Templo even now) ignored our inquiry, forcing us to bring the matter to the Ombudsman where it is still pending. Nevertheless we are aware of their atrociously high salaries. A cut in the salary, especially of Templo, is to be applauded.

We suggest that Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin also look into the income of these officers as directors of banks and other big companies where the SSS has investments, consisting of director's fees, per diems, allowances, bonuses and profit sharing, etc. running to millions of pesos, which are being appropriated as personal income of these directors, instead of as income of the institutions they represent. We know this for a fact in the SSS, but it may also be true with other government financial institutions as well. We also know that, in addition to all these, as executive officers, they still get many kinds of allowances which she may also want to look into.

Incidentally, we are offended and therefore protest the statement of columnist Jerry Barican saying that Boncodin "...is even more stupid than she looks." Coming from a former Palace official, this insult to Boncodin, who had the guts to question the inordinate salaries and perks of executives of government-owned and controlled corporations which no one in the government dared to do before, is also an affront to suffering Filipinos who, in the end, will benefit from her bold initiative.

We hope that under the Macapagal administration retirees will be appreciated for what they are—a vast national resource, a wealth of talent and experience who still want "to serve as we have served."—**AMADO F. CABAERO, national president, Philippine Association of Retired Persons, 11 Brosas St., BF Resort Village, Las Piñas City**

Maze of road projects

WHAT is it with politicians and their obsessive need to dig up and fix all major and traffic-prone roads? Do they honestly think that by digging in different places all at the same time they can get things done faster? Yet these projects always seem to take twice as long as the allotted time to get done.

And all this for what? To worsen the already bad traffic situation? To complicate the already confusing roads and intersections with detours? To further lengthen the already very long travel time? Or perhaps to cultivate hot-headed and undisciplined motorists?

I sincerely hope that these politicians will wake up and smell the pollution. We need solutions, and not more problems to add to what we already have. I think that if they truly care about their fellow citizens, instead of lining their pockets with money not intended for them, they would come up with better thought-out action plans to solve our seemingly never-ending traffic problems.—**VANIA YSABEL S. PADILLA, Antipolo City**

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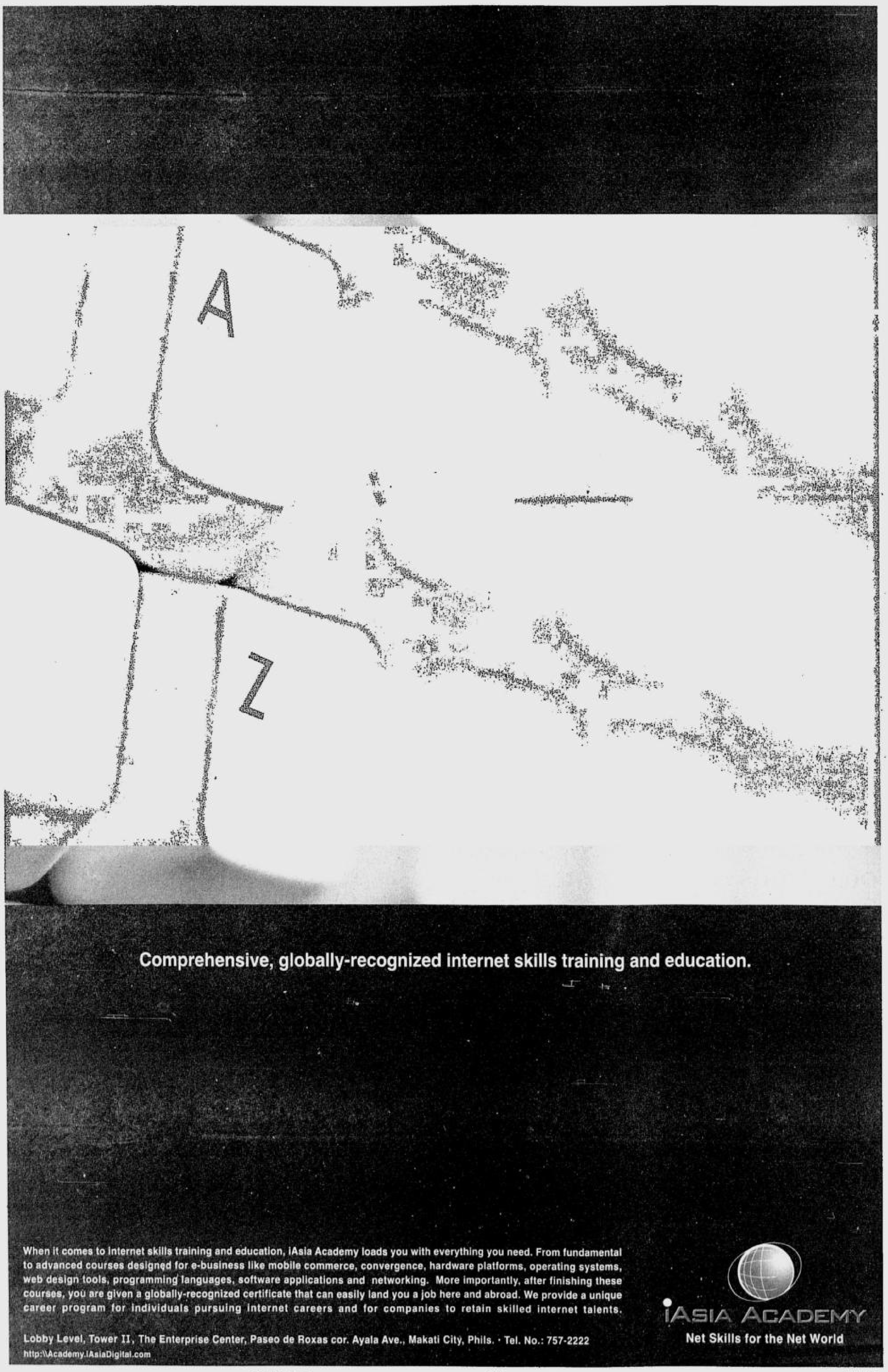

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

The WORLD

Luverne B. Gueco, Editor

Book row could imperil Japan-S. Korea ties–Kim

SEOUL, South Korea—President Kim Dae-jung said yesterday he was "shocked" by Japan's refusal to revise its controversial history textbooks and warned that the issue could imperil ties between the two countries.

"I cannot but feel shocked," Kim said after being briefed on Japan's official rejection a day earlier of Seoul's demand for revision of the controversial textbooks that critics say whitewash Japan's wartime atrocities.

Kim's remarks were released to the press by his chief spokesperson, Park Joon-young.

Japan angered South Korea and other Asian countries in April by approving eight middle school textbooks, including one written by nationalist scholars who deny Japan committed documented atrocities during World War II.

In June, South Korea asked Japan to revise 35 textbook passages that it believes gloss over atrocities committed during Japan's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula from 1910-1945.

South Korea was upset by the failure of those textbooks to mention tens of thousands of Korean and other Asian women who were forced to serve as sexual slaves for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

Japan responded Monday by informing Seoul that it can revise only two of the 35 disputed passages. Seoul officials say the two proposed revisions are of relatively lesser significance to them.

President Kim showed his anger by refusing to meet a high-level Japanese delegation dispatched to seek Seoul's understanding of Tokyo's textbook decision.

"How can people who lack correct knowledge of their country's history promote friendship with people of other neighboring countries?" Kim said.

"We can't condone this situation. Our government will continue to demand revision of the history textbooks," he said.

The controversy was a setback for Kim, who visited Japan in 1998 and pledged to put the issue of the countries' thorny history to rest and build a future-oriented relationship.

"I am shocked at the thought that all efforts I have made so far to build a truly friendly relationship with Japan may have to go back to square one," Kim said. *AP*

A STUDENT looks at pictures showing Japanese security forces killing South Koreans during the 1910-1945 colonial era at an exhibition titled "Japan's Distorted History Textbook" at the National Assembly building in Seoul, July 10. AP

Levy's ma dares Condit: Take lie test

MODESTO, California—The mother of missing federal intern Chandra Levy said that US Rep. Gary Condit should take a lie detector test.

Standing at the door to her home on Monday, Susan Levy urged Condit "to come ahead and take the polygraph test and to help us find our daughter and bring her home, back to us alive and unhurt.

"I'm not accusing anybody of anything," she added, "but I think there is truth out there and someone knows the truth."

Chandra Levy, 24, was last seen in Washington, D.C., on April 30. Over the weekend, a source speaking on condition of anonymity said that the 53-year-old Condit, in his third interview with police and the FBI, told investigators for the first time that he had a romantic relationship with Levy.

In Washington, Condit lawyer Abbe Lowell said the congressman has cooperated with police and was willing to give them access to his apartment.

Lowell said Condit was ready to give investigators telephone and cell phone records and would make his staff available for questioning.

"The congressman will provide whatever additional information or material he can to police," Lowell said.

He said that if the police ask about a lie detector test he would discuss it with Condit, but he expressed doubt about the general usefulness of polygraphs.

The Levys' lawyer, Billy Martin, said at a Washington news conference that the missing woman's family had specific questions for Condit.

Martin said he wrote to Condit's lawyer asking about the congressman's relationship with Levy, including when he last saw her, how they met and the nature of the relationship. *AP*

Haze forces Thais to remain indoors

BANGKOK—Residents in five Thai provinces bordering Malaysia were warned yesterday to stay indoors or wear face masks, as a choking haze caused by Indonesian forest fires hung over the country's south.

The Environmental Health Center in Songkhla province said the warning was particularly aimed at people who were already suffering from conditions like asthma.

"The situation is not yet at a dangerous stage, but we have advised people not to directly inhale the haze and to stay indoors, or if they must go outdoors, to wear masks," said the center's director Ongart Chanacharnmongkol.

Ongart said the haze from Indonesia's Sumatra island had covered Thailand's five southernmost provinces—Satun, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat—since Saturday.

The situation was not yet as bad as 1997-98, when smog from slash-and-burn farming blanketed much of the region, but motorists were already being forced to keep their lights on for an extra hour in the morning, he said.

"So far the level of dust is moderate, it has not yet reached a critical level, but we have to wait and see."

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has expressed concern over the pollution problem and ordered the interior ministry to map out a plan to alleviate the situation, deputy government spokesperson Kuthep Saikrachang said.

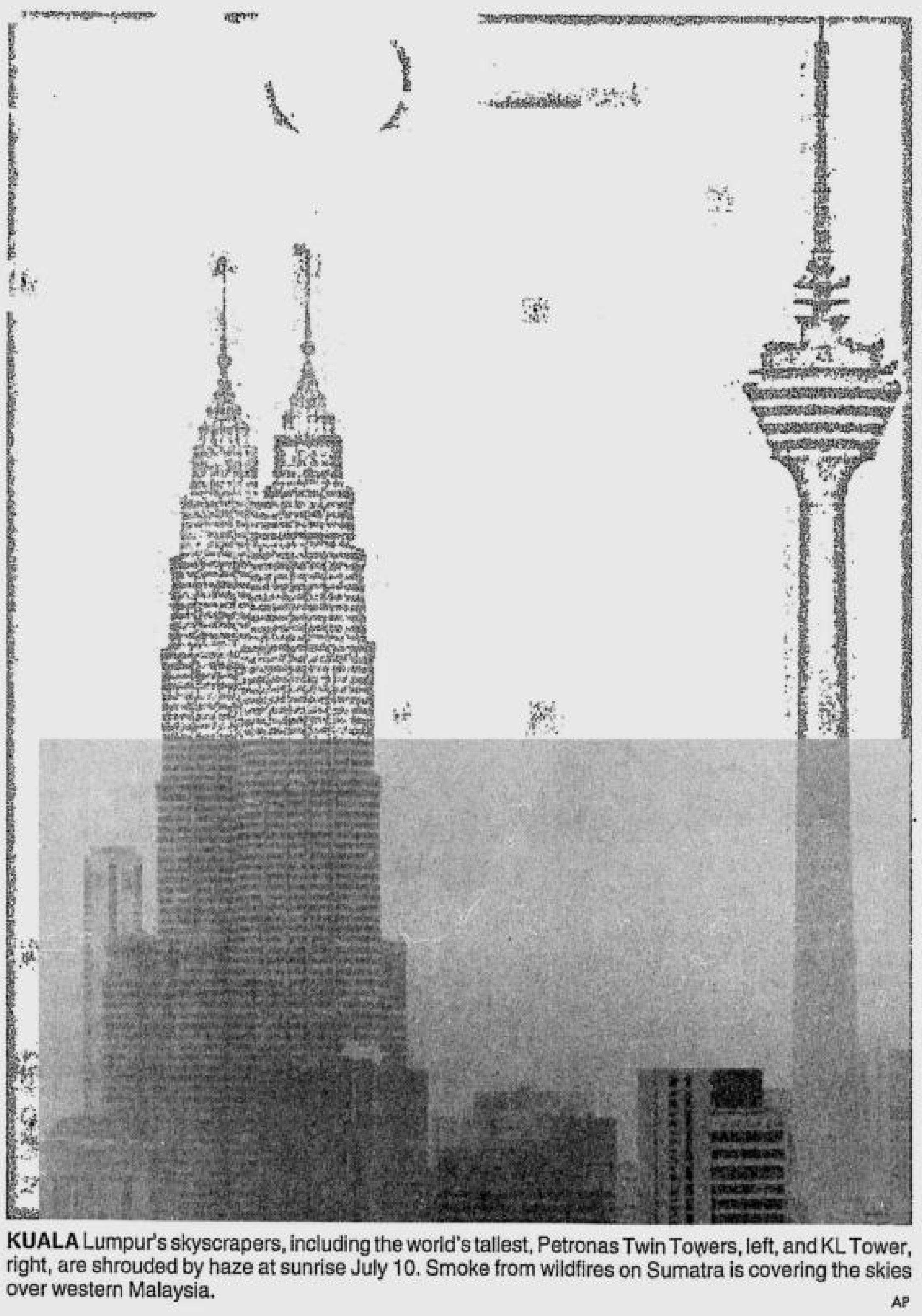
During the weekly Cabinet meeting Thaksin suggested "rain seeding" techniques could be deployed to help clear away the dust.

"In case there is no rain in affected provinces the prime minister has ordered the interior ministry to make artificial rain in these provinces to lessen damage and suffering," Kuthep said.

The Public Health Ministry is also planning to hand out 20,000 face masks through provincial offices for residents who need to work or do errands outdoors.

The pollution crisis has reportedly forced many fishermen to stay in port in Satun province, where visibility is down to less than 100 meters on land, and under one kilometer at sea.

The haze crisis that enveloped Southeast Asia in 1997 and 1998 caused an estimated $9.3 billion in economic losses. Many of the fires were deliberately set by planters clearing land for cultivation. *AFP*



KUALA Lumpur's skyscrapers, including the world's tallest, Petronas Twin Towers, left, and KL Tower, right, are shrouded by haze at sunrise July 10. Smoke from wildfires on Sumatra is covering the skies over western Malaysia. AP

Court says Pinochet unfit to stand trial

SANTIAGO, Chile—Chile's Augusto Pinochet—the archetypal Cold War military dictator—was declared mentally unfit on Monday to stand trial for death squad killings shortly after his 1973 coup, likely ending efforts to prosecute him.

The Appeals Court ruled that Pinochet, 85, suffers from such severe dementia that he cannot be prosecuted on charges of covering up 75 murders by the "Caravan of Death," an army unit that toured northern Chile by helicopter eliminating suspected leftists.

Police fired water cannon and tear gas at hundreds of people in central Santiago protesting against the court's decision, witnesses said.

Four protesters were arrested at the march in and around the Paseo Ahumada pedestrian thoroughfare late on Monday.

The court decision, taken by a 2-1 vote of a panel of judges, is technically a suspension of the charges against Pinochet and can be appealed.

But few in Chile now believe Pinochet will ever appear in court because of the time-consuming appeals process, the ex-general's age and an unwillingness to reopen old wounds from his 1973-1990 rule.

"I think, unfortunately, that this is as far as the Pinochet case goes," prosecution lawyer Juan Bustos told reporters.

Legal experts say some 250 other human rights cases against Pinochet in Chile are now likely to crumble.

One of the former dictator's sons expressed relief. Pinochet is believed to have diabetes and aides say he has suffered at least two strokes in recent years.

"I hope with this ruling that our father can have a little more peace during what is left of his life," Marco Antonio Pinochet told Chilean radio.

Despite the protest, interest in having Pinochet put on trial has dwindled in Chile as the legal wrangles have drawn out. *Reuters*

US warns UN it will fight for arms makers

UNITED NATIONS—The United States on Monday warned a UN meeting on small arms trafficking it was prepared to do battle to defend the rights of arms makers and legal gun owners—even when the guns they want to own were specifically designed for war.

John Bolton, US undersecretary of state for arms control, fired off the warning shot on the opening day of a conference aimed at clamping down on the billion-dollar-a-year global small arms trade, which UN officials blame for half a million deaths a year and enormous human suffering.

"People all over the world are looking to this conference for meaningful steps toward enhancing human security and preventing further suffering and destruction of life," Harri Holkeri of Finland, president of the 189-nation UN General Assembly, said as the meeting opened.

But Bolton said the United States could not accept numerous provisions of a draft action plan due to be adopted on July 20, the conference's final day. In doing so, he drove a wedge between Washington and its European Union allies and lined up with Russia, China and India, analysts said.

"The United States is going to isolate itself from its closest allies," said Loretta Bondi of the Washington-based Fund for Peace. Brazilian delegate Rubem Cesar Fernandes said, "It sounded like they wanted the conference to collapse."

Bolton said the draft plan was studded with "ambiguity and overbreadth." Washington wanted it to target only illegal trading of military-style weapons and do nothing to "constrain legal trade and legal manufacturing."

Anti-gun activists, on the other hand, want to crack down on both legal and illegal arms deals, arguing that the vast majority of illegal weapons started out as legal.

According to UN definition, the small arms category includes such powerful arms as grenades, mortars, assault rifles, machine guns and shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles as well as handguns. *Reuters*

Separated Kashmiris hope for peace between India, Pakistan

BY AMIR ZIA

NEELUM VALLEY, Pakistan—A stout, bearded man on Pakistan's side of the disputed Kashmir border with India peers into the distance, then begins to wave wildly with his hands.

From a small village across the Neelum River that meanders along the border, a friend clad in white baggy pants waves back.

For more than 50 years, since Pakistan was carved out of India after British rule ended in 1947, the people of Kashmir have been divided by the dispute between the two countries over this lush Himalayan region that each claims as its own.

"They are that close to us, but we can't meet them," said Malik Saeed, a guard of an abandoned tourist resort that shows signs of the frequent artillery duels between the two countries.

"It has been more than 50 years now that our families are divided," said Saeed. "A whole generation has spent a lifetime waiting to unite with their relatives across the border."

Uncertainty and fears of renewed fighting loom large among Kashmiris who have lived in the shadow of the conflict all their lives, even as Pakistan and India prepare for their first summit in two years later this month.

Kashmir is the only Muslim-majority state in Hindu-dominated India. Pakistan demands a referendum in line with UN resolutions to determine whether Kashmiris want unification with India or Pakistan. Indian officials reject the proposal and say Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Islamic militants have been waging a bloody secessionist war in Indian Kashmir since 1989, fighting for unification with Pakistan or complete independence. India accuses Pakistan of sponsoring the rebels, but Pakistan denies the charge and says it is unable to stop indigenous Kashmiris from crossing the border.

Until seven months ago, the thickly forested Neelum Valley was the center of fierce artillery duels between Pakistani and Indian soldiers. Scores of buildings in the valley on Pakistan's side of the border were turned into heaps of rubble.

Many villagers fled, but others resigned themselves to the fighting, cowering in underground bunkers or damaged homes.

"You have come here in good times, because there is a truce between Pakistan and India," Saeed tells a visiting journalist.

Kashmir has been the centerpiece of one of the world's most protracted and bloody border disputes. In many parts of the valley, the Neelum River is the only demarcation between these two rival nuclear-power nations.

Since the two countries announced a cease-fire in November last year, some villagers have started to trickle back to their broken homes.

A key road connecting the valley with Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani Kashmir, recently reopened to traffic for the first time in 10 years, after Indian soldiers stopped targeting vehicles from their mountain positions. Still few homes are being rebuilt because of fears of more fighting.

Saeed, the guard at the closed tourist resort, pleaded for the Kashmiris to be reunited. *AP*

A TRIBUTE TO THE PRESIDENT WHO SAW US THROUGH A CRUCIAL CROSSROAD OF HISTORY.

Manuel Acuña Roxas was not only the last president of the Philippine Commonwealth and the first president of the Philippine Republic that was recognized on July 4, 1946, he was also the one faced with the daunting task of rebuilding a country devastated by war.

Although he was recalled by his Maker after only two years into his presidency, President Roxas ably laid the groundwork for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Philippines after World War II. He established the central monetary system, approved the first Master Economic Plan for the country and signed the blueprint for the reconstruction of the City of Manila.

Manuel A. Roxas lived for only 56 years, but his was a life well-spent, with many outstanding achievements - valedictorian of the UP College of Law, first Philippine Bar topnotcher with a grade of 92%, Capiz governor at age 27 and Speaker of Congress at 31.

Two events best illustrated the kind of man Roxas was: After laboring with Osmeña for the passage of the Hare-Hawes Cutting Act in the U.S. Congress, Roxas supported the alternative Tydings-McDuffie Act pushed by Quezon, all for the sake of Philippine independence.

During the Japanese occupation, Roxas was imprisoned and tortured by the dreaded *Kempetai*, yet he refused to be part of the puppet government.

Fifty-five years have passed since the July 4th ascendancy of Manuel A. Roxas, yet his legacy of statesmanship and excellent service lives on.

As a tribute to the life of President Manuel A. Roxas, CAP has erected a nine-foot bronze statue in his honor in front of the CAP building in Roxas City.

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Cagayan under calamity state

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Almost a week after typhoon "Feria's" destructive rains and winds, the provincial government of Cagayan on Monday declared the province under a state of calamity.

Gov. Edgar Lara expressed hope the move would hasten the release of both national and local funds to help typhoon victims in the province.

The Cagayan disaster coordinating council said Feria affected 39,319 families and left six people dead in the province.

Damage to agriculture was placed at P129.46 million and to infrastructure at P46.48 million.

As an austerity measure, Lara said the provincial board froze the purchase of vehicles for provincial officials.

Vice Gov. Oscar Pagulayan said he would ask President Macapagal-Arroyo and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to release the P10 million earlier allotted by Malacañang for the rehabilitation of Cagayan due to previous typhoons.

The release of the funds was overtaken by events that led to Edsa 2, Pagulayan said.

Provincial officials said they would also seek financial aid from the President after Feria severely hit the province.

Ilocos Sur

In Ilocos Sur, latest reports gathered by the INQUIRER showed that at least 29 people were killed from Feria's onslaught last week.

The fatalities included a family of six who were buried by a landslide in Sugpon town, an upland town at the southeastern part of the province.

Half of the Sugpon municipal hall was also buried by landslides, reports said.

The floods displaced more than 37,000 families in the province, reports said.

In Mt. Province, a young tourist from Bulacan and a guide drowned in an underground river that navigates through the famous Sagada Caves at the height of Feria.

The tourist, Jonathan Bumolto, who authorities said was from Bulacan, and his friend Nomer Wansing of Palawan, went to the caves on July 4, the height of Feria's fury, with a tourist guide, Sagada resident Josephine Omameng, in tow.

Reports from the Philippine Information Agency in Mt. Province said a strong underground current swept the three. Wansing managed to crawl to safety.

The bodies of Bumolto and Omaming were recovered recently, according to PIA officer Art Tibaldo, who has arrived from Sagada early Tuesday.

"But I do not know if they managed to ship (Bumolto's remains) home. It takes 12 hours to get out of there now because of road cuts," Tibaldo said.

He said communications there had been down since the typhoon. Access to the province, through the Halsema Highway, had been cut, and travelers now use the Ifugao route.

Feria left six fatalities in Mt. Province.

The PIA also documented the fate of Edmundo Pidlao Jr., a marine engineering student of Dagupan City, who was dragged by the strong Chico River as he tried to rescue three people stranded on a mound of debris in the middle of the river.

Tibaldo said Pidlao volunteered to wade toward the three, held fast to the riverbanks by an abaca rope. The rope snapped as Pidlao inched closer toward the debris, causing him to be pulled by the current.

Puerto Princesa

In Puerto Princesa City, government officials declared the whole city under a state of calamity after 10 barangays were hit by Feria.

Members of the City council, in a special session on July 7, passed a resolution putting the whole city under a state of calamity. This is the first resolution passed by the new council after its inauguration.

About 215 families were displaced by Feria, which uprooted trees and wrecked houses mostly along the shorelines, with a still undetermined amount of structures and crops destroyed as of Saturday morning.

Unofficial reports, however, placed the number of families displaced at 313, mostly children.

Fifty families were reported to be staying in barangay halls while others chose to stay with relatives on safe grounds.

Lawyer Allen Rodriguez, Assistant City Administrator and head of the City Disaster Coordinating Council, asked for the release of P2 million as calamity fund for the families. He said relief operations were immediately conducted but available goods could last only a few days.

In other parts of Palawan, Feria uprooted trees that barricaded major thoroughfares.

Visayas

In Negros Occidental, about P2.1 million worth of crops were damaged and more than 3,200 persons displaced when Feria unleashed its wrath in the province's seven towns and two cities on July 4.

A report submitted by the Provincial Welfare and Development Office showed that strong winds destroyed 103 houses and damaged 478 others in the cities of Talisay and Cadiz and in the towns of Valladolid, Pontevedra, Pulupandan and San Enrique.

Worst hit was Valladolid where 1,800 persons were displaced after the winds destroyed 50 houses and damaged 250 others.

In Pulupandan, 1,350 persons were affected when 34 houses were destroyed and 209 others were damaged at the height of Feria.

The PWDO report also showed that 15 houses were destroyed and 15 others were damaged in San Enrique, displacing 117 persons.

Four houses were destroyed and another four were damaged in Talisay and in Cadiz, affecting 30 persons. Twelve persons were displaced after Feria destroyed two houses in Pontevedra.

Provincial agriculturist Igmedio Tabianan reported that Feria damaged P2.1 million worth of crops in Hinigaran, Ilog and Don Salvador Benedicto.

About P580,500 of worth of corn plants were destroyed in Don Salvador Benedicto and Hinigaran towns.

Feria also destroyed P1,185,850 worth of banana plants in Don Salvador Benedicto and towns Ilog and P364,800, in Hinigaran town. ***Reports from Estanislao Caldez, Villamor Visaya Jr., Leoncio Balbin Jr. and Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, Ruelle Albert D. Castro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

'Feria' devastation continues

By CRISTINA ARZADON
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—Typhoon "Feria" did not chalk up as much damage in agriculture and infrastructure in Ilocos Norte as typhoon "Iliang's" devastation in 1998.

But officials here noted that Feria's impact on the lives of residents would linger for a long time.

The three days of continuous rains and gusty winds beginning the first Tuesday of July were perhaps the longest days by far to most residents since Iliang hit the province.

Feria had already left the country, but the devastation continues. Ilocos Norte has been isolated after a major bridge connecting the province to the southern section collapsed.

Feria began to batter the province Tuesday night, dumping heavy rains that instantly flooded major streets here.

The next two days, intensified winds and unrelenting rains caused work stoppage and suspension of classes as floodwater overflowing from drainage systems crept inside houses. Rampaging waters swamped several bridges, rendering them impassable to all types of vehicles.

The bridge in Badoc town, which connects the province's southern section to this capital city, collapsed and prevented passenger buses from entering and leaving the city.

Motorists from Metro Manila avoided the Ilocos route and detoured to Cagayan but it took them 15 hours to reach the province.

Rubber boat

Hundreds of passengers from Manila on Tuesday were stranded in Badoc because only a rubber boat can get across the river and ferry people to the other side of the bridge.

Power was restored only late Friday in some parts of the city but it was still lights out in at least 20 of the 22 Ilocos Norte towns since Tuesday.

Residents have been queuing at pump wells in the neighborhood and scarce bottled water services for their drinking and household needs because water supply was cut off by the typhoon.

Long distance telephone services were unavailable until Friday because landline phones, including cellular phones, went dead.

"That's the state we're in right now. There's no way to feed information to Metro Manila," said Lito Gorospe, the provincial capitol's press consultant, on Friday.

Damages

The Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, in its partial assessment, said Ilocos Norte lost P24.3 million in damaged infrastructure, crops, fisheries and livestock.

Vice Gov. Windell Chua, the acting governor in the absence of Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., said the initial figures were enough for the provincial board to declare Ilocos Norte under a state of calamity.

Chua said the provincial government would be using its P15-million calamity fund to rehabilitate the province.

A portion of the fund is being eyed to assist victims whose houses were either damaged or destroyed.

Recipients could get up to P10,000 to repair their houses whose rooftops were either blown away or destroyed by falling trees, Chua said.

"Certainly, we hope the national government can assist the provincial counterpart in bringing relief to our province mates," he said.

The initial figures, however, do not reflect the state of disaster wrought by Feria among the residents' lives and properties.

Victims

As of July 5, the PDCC has recorded 3,571 families in 137 villages who sought government assistance for various typhoon-related incidents.

This was apart from the 1,858 families affected after their villages were flooded for days.

The victims came from 17 of the 22 towns in the province.

Before Feria, typhoon Iliang slammed the province in 1998 and exacted the heaviest toll on agriculture and infrastructure with losses reaching P164.3 million.

Chua shared residents' observation that Feria is the worst calamity that hit Ilocos Norte by far.

"Hundreds of families in a coastal village in Pasuquin sought permanent relocation when they were hit by tidal waves at the height of the typhoon," Chua said.

Displaced families have sought temporary shelter in houses offered by virtual strangers. Those who found no immediate home pitched tents along the town's national highway.

Floodwater crept inside houses destroying investments from furniture, house appliances and even stored grocery items.

Disaster and relief teams could not be dispatched immediately to affected areas because communication lines broke down while major roads were either flooded or inaccessible because of fallen trees.

Thick mud

In the center of the city, customers drop in trickles in a drugstore, the only open establishment in an array of businesses lining the deserted streets on Thursday.

In nearby San Nicolas town, furniture and grocery stores opened up their iron enclosures but only to rid their establishments of thick mud that littered their floors and smudged their wares.

On the roadside, too, were strewn beds, chairs, sofas and rugs being scraped of dirt.

"I have spent most of my life here. But I never saw an ocean of floodwater in the streets and in our homes," said a schoolteacher, adding that floodwater rose up to their necks at the height of Feria's rains.

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ROUNDUP

Pagasa taps radar

BAGUIO CITY—The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) here has started using the radar that was installed last year on Mt. Sto. Tomas. The Duffler Weather Surveillance Radar 985 was installed to improve typhoon tracking and weather surveillance in the region, said Joseph Rios, chief meteorologist of Pagasa in Baguio. ***Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Drug dealer falls

BOCAUE, Bulacan—A suspected drug dealer was arrested after a 30-minute car chase along the North Luzon Expressway here Friday. Police said patrol officers of Philippine National Construction Corp. chased Kosair Makalintal of Quiapo, Manila, after observing that he was driving recklessly along the tollway. During the chase, Makalintal was injured after his car bumped another car. Makalintal was taken to a hospital in Meycauayan town and was placed under police custody when policemen and PNCC personnel found four kilos of shabu (methampethamine hydrochloride) in his car.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Cop gets life term

TAGBILARAN CITY—A policeman was meted a maximum prison term of two years for accidentally killing his friend in 1999. PO1 Wenceslao Purisima was found guilty of homicide by Judge Baudilio Dosdos of the Regional Trial Court Branch 2. Purisima was also ordered to indemnify the heirs of Glenn Lungay with P165,000 in funeral and medical expenses and cost of litigation. The policeman was showing his firearm to Lungay on Feb. 9, 1999 when it accidentally went off, hitting the victim in the head.

Chito A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

Suspension assailed

DUMAGUETE CITY—The legal counsel of four government doctors and a supply officer of the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital (NOPH) described as "compartmentalized justice" a decision of the Office of the Ombudsman to suspend them for six months. Lawyer Saleto Erames said he saw no reason why five of his clients were suspended while the four others were cleared. Erames had asked the Ombudsman to reconsider its decision because the doctors' suspension would jeopardize the hospital's medical services. He added that he was ready to bring the case to the Supreme Court if the Ombudsman denies his motion.

Alex V. Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Quake spares bridges

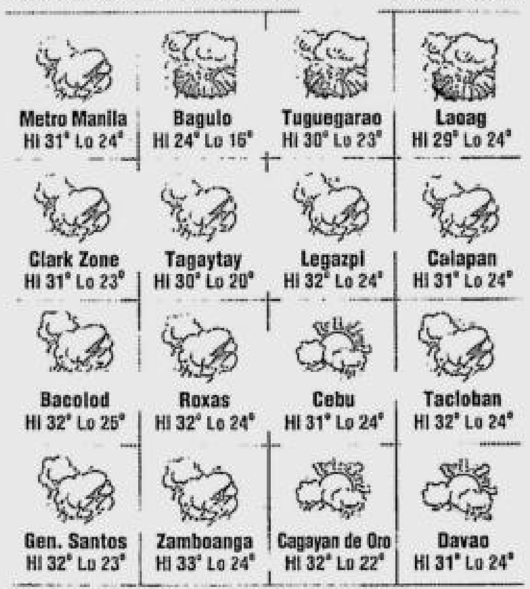
CALAPAN CITY—The Department of Public Works and Highways has dispatched its structural engineers to evaluate the condition of major bridges in Oriental Mindoro after an earthquake hit the province early Monday. "We want to ensure that our bridges are safe," said Efren G. Padilla, Oriental Mindoro assistant district engineer. Padilla said that as of Monday noon, their engineers had reported no damage to bridges in Calapan and Baco towns. An earthquake on Nov. 15, 1994 destroyed more than 20 bridges here. ***Joel J. Jabal, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Outstanding Quezonian

The Quezon provincial government has launched its annual search for citizen achievers who approximated the life example of the late President Manuel L. Quezon. At stake are the Gintong Medalya ng Karangalan and the Medalya ng Karangalan. Gov. Wilfrido L. Enverga announced that the outstanding Quezonians would be recognized during the Quezon Day celebrations in Lucena on Aug. 19. Since 1970 when the awards project was started, only five nominees were given the Gintong Medalya ng Karangalan. They were Fr. Horacio de la Costa, Gen. Guillermo Nakar, Senators Claro M. Recto and Lorenzo Tañada, and Ricardo Cardinal Vidal.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will experience stormy weather and the coastal waters will be rough to very rough. The rest of Northern Luzon will have rains with gusty winds and the coastal waters will be rough. The rest of Luzon and Western Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms. SOURCE: PAGASA



Metro Manila Hi 31° Lo 24°	Baguio Hi 24° Lo 16°	Tuguegarao Hi 30° Lo 23°	Laoag Hi 29° Lo 24°
Clark Zone Hi 31° Lo 23°	Tagaytay Hi 30° Lo 20°	Legazpi Hi 32° Lo 24°	Calapan Hi 31° Lo 24°
Bacolod Hi 32° Lo 25°	Roxas Hi 32° Lo 24°	Cebu Hi 31° Lo 24°	Tacloban Hi 32° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos Hi 32° Lo 23°	Zamboanga Hi 33° Lo 24°	Cagayan de Oro Hi 32° Lo 22°	Davao Hi 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/07/11/01

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Soldiers arrest 9 MILF rebs

COTABATO CITY—Soldiers rounded up nine suspected Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels and seized from them 17 high-powered firearms in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, during a raid on Sunday.

Army Col. Antonio Romero, 603rd Infantry Brigade chief, said "persistent reports" from residents, indicating the presence of assorted firearms from civilians, prompted the military to raid a house reportedly owned by a certain Nasser Ali, alias "Commander Nasser" of the MILF.

The house at Barangay Gang in Sultan Kudarat town, about 200 meters from the highway, is near the house of MILF legal counsel and peace panel member Lanang Ali, he said.

According to Romero, the raiders, led by Lt. Col. Danilo Garcia of the 3rd Infantry Battalion, seized Armalite rifles, M-79 grenade launchers and RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) launchers.

Nasser and eight of his men, who were then attending a wedding, were arrested.

But the MILF leadership demanded the release of the group and the return of the firearms, claiming they were escorts of Lanang.

Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for political affairs, said the raid violated the ceasefire agreement between the rebel group and the government.

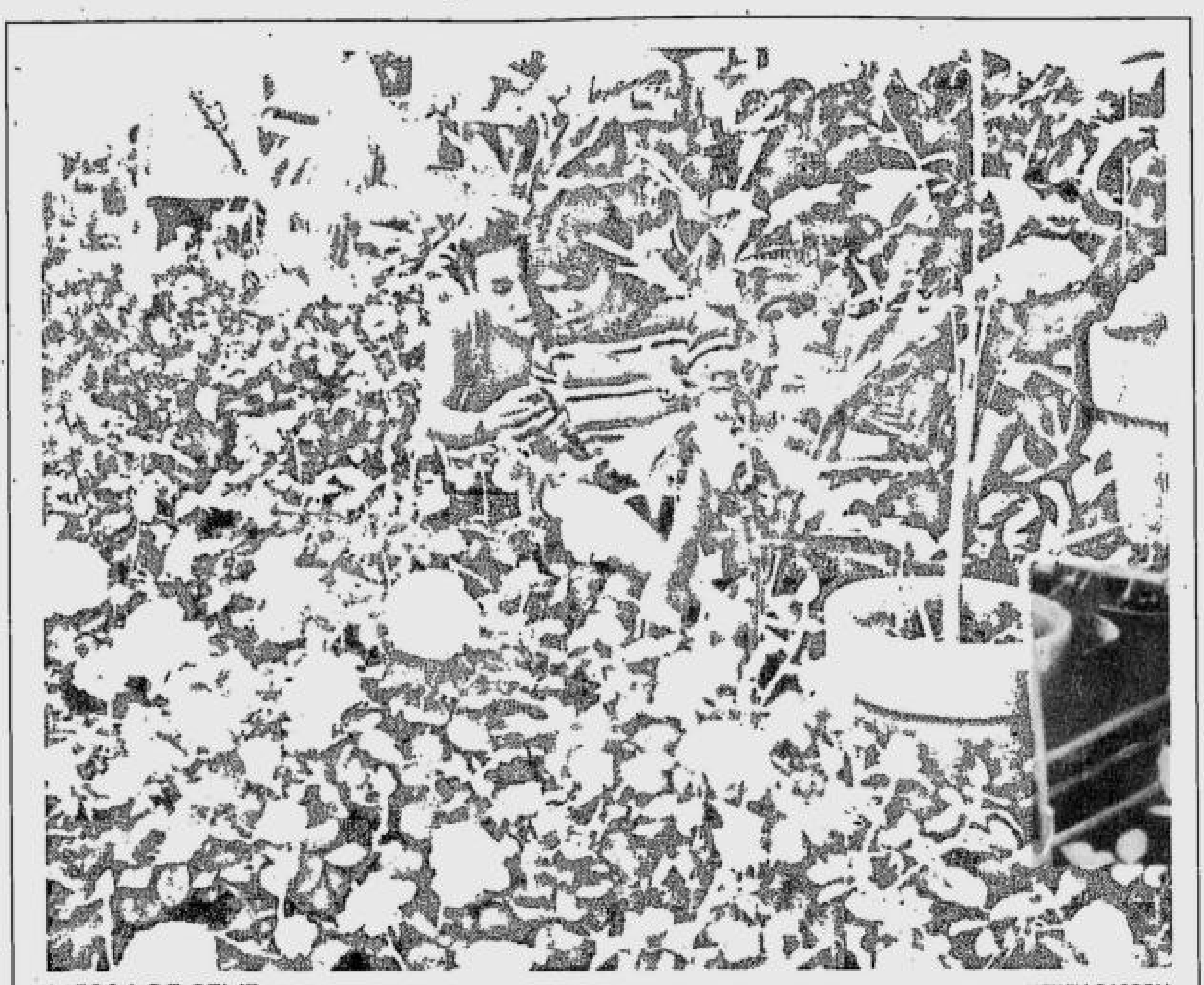
The incident, he said, "was not only unfortunate and uncalled for but also an affront to the sincerity" of the Macapagal administration in the ongoing peace negotiation.

He said the confiscated firearms belonged to MILF members securing Lanang.

"We were enforcing the government's campaign against loose firearms when we ordered for the conduct of the raid. We only learned later that the gun wielders were MILF members," Romero said.

Jaafar urged the government "to exercise political maturity" in resolving the controversial raid "before the trust and confidence of the people on President Macapagal-Arroyo's all-out peace policy is put to waste. *Edwin O. Fernandez and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Muslim youths back oust-Misuari bid



MESSAGE SENT

MELVIN GASCON

The two young girls seem to be more interested in sending text messages through a mobile cellular phone than minding a flower shop in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. The high-tech craze has made the country the texting capital of the world, according to experts.

COTABATO CITY—The ouster of Nur Misuari as head of the Moro National Liberation Front appeared to have snowballed when a youth group on Monday called for his resignation as Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao governor due to alleged dismal performance.

"Governor Misuari should step down from office because of mismanagement and abuse of authority," Aishia Prudencio, spokesperson of the United Youth of the Philippines and the National Youth Alliance of the Philippines, said.

The 15-man executive council, which ousted Misuari as chair of the MNLF, met here Monday to discuss several issues, including the reunification of all Moro revolutionary forces.

Prudencio said the Mindanao-wide public consultations, which were attended by Muslims, Christians and highlanders, indicated that many of them want a change in the ARMM leadership.

The youth group has sought the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Congress to put an end to Misuari's rule over the four-province ARMM.

The move came following reports that the Aug. 15 ARMM election would be postponed, forcing the Senate to extend Misuari's term as regional governor in a "hold-over capacity."

Prudencio said Misuari's tenure had been extended several times since he was elected in 1996 due to postponements of the ARMM election.

While the governor is at the helm, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi have remained socioeconomically stagnant, she said.

She noted that Misuari frequently traveled to Manila and abroad and seemed unmindful of the poverty gripping his constituents.

"All we see are extravagant meetings (and) luxurious travels at the expense of the taxpayers' money," Prudencio said.

Delayed payment of salaries and unnecessary deduction of 10 percent from each regional department's maintenance and operating expenses allocation that go to a "common fund" are among the complaints of the ARMM's rank and file.

However, Majendra Madjilon, regional information chief, doubted the youth sector's anti-Misuari stand.

"They could be used by a group lobbying for the governor's ouster in the MNLF hierarchy," said Madjilon, who claimed that other youths support Misuari's leadership, not only in the MNLF but also in the ARMM.

Madjilon maintained that to many Moros and the MNLF, Misuari remains their leader.

But while Misuari claims leadership of the erstwhile rebel front, the Executive Council of 15, which ousted him as chair said it was working for the reunification of the MNLF and the MILF.

The MILF, the biggest Moro rebel movement in Mindanao, is currently holding peace talks with the Philippine government.

"Unity talks had been started in Kuala Lumpur between the MNLF, MILF and the Islamic Command Council (ICC)," Sema told ranking MNLF officials and supporters during the MNLF Bangsamoro Congress at the Cotabato City State Polytechnic College parade grounds.

Sema said representatives from the MNLF, MILF and the ICC were expected to sign a declaration of unity.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said his group had been invited to join the reunification efforts but since it was talking peace with the government, the matter would be discussed in the GRP-MILF talks in Malaysia later this month.

Malacañang had been proposing a "shared autonomy" between the government and the MILF, a move that local political analysts believed would necessitate reunification of the MNLF and the MILF.

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza, who chairs the government panel talking with the MILF, said the "shared autonomy scheme" was among the vital issues to be discussed in future negotiations.

In the 1970s and early '80s, MNLF leaders bolted out of the organization and formed the MILF to push the bid for independence of the Bangsamoro (Moro nation).

"One reason why some leaders broke away from the MNLF in the past two years was the dictatorship, mismanagement and instransparency of MNLF leadership under then Chairman Nur Misuari," Sema told MNLF supporters who responded with applause.

About 50,000 supporters of the council gathered here Monday.

Salem Adem of the OIC ministerial committee of the eight and Tengku Jaafar Haron of Malaysia also attended the meeting of the executive council. *Charlie C. Señase and Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Suspected rebel killed in clash

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—A suspected rebel was killed in an early morning encounter between government troops and a New People's Army group on the slopes of Mt. Banahaw near the boundary of Quezon and Laguna on Tuesday.

Two young girls were wounded when they were caught in the crossfire.

Supt. Alberto Mercado, acting police provincial director, said members of the 417th provincial mobile police group and the Lucban police chanced upon the NPA group at about 2 a.m. in Barangay Igang, Lucban, Quezon.

Mercado said that after a 20-minute exchange of gunfire, the guerrillas retreated in different directions, leaving behind the body of their comrade, identified as Javier Arellano, alias Ka Mando.

Police said several villagers revealed that the rebels carried with them several wounded companions as they fled.

Wounded in the crossfire were Rochele Arellano, 8, who suffered a bullet wound near the buttock, and her elder sister Jocelyn, 13, who was hit in the right thigh.

They were brought to the Quezon Memorial Hospital here.

"The rebels could have shot and wounded the civilians because they were shooting our men from inside the house," Mercado said.

Mercado said the policemen found a .45 cal. pistol, several M-14 magazines, and NPA documents inside the house.

The wounded victims told the INQUIRER that the fatality was their father.

Marilou, the eldest sister of the victims, also denied that their father was an NPA member.

"He was just taking care of the fighting cocks owned by the mayor of Bay, Laguna. He was never an NPA," she said.

But she said that there were really NPA rebels inside their house during the encounter.

"More than 20 NPA rebels arrived in our house, including four women, the night before. They asked my father if they could spend the night with us. My father allowed them in because he was afraid that we might be harmed if he refused," Marilou said.

Gov blames official's son for abduction

COTABATO CITY—A son of a local politician and five others who have links with Moro rebels have conspired to abduct Chinese national Zhang Zhong Quiang in North Cotabato, Gov. Emmanuel Piñol charged yesterday.

Piñol's revelation came after five suspects who were arrested by police tagged a son of an influential town official as the mastermind of the kidnapping.

Zhang, 43, an official of China Import-Export Technologies (Citech), was seized on June 20, while on board a van from Davao City en route to Carmen, North Cotabato, site of the Japanese-funded Malitubog-Maridagao irrigation dam where Citech is among the subcontractors.

Piñol identified the suspects, who were held for questioning, as van owner Percival Ceriales, driver Vicente Guingona, construction worker Jimmy Navaja, and security guards Rudy Balasama and a certain Naser.

The governor refused to identify the brains of the Zhang abduction.

"I talked to the guy about it, but he denied. But the fact remains that his companions are pointing at him as their boss," Piñol said.

He said he had given the man two days to hand over Zhang, an engineer who could hardly speak English.

On Monday, Moro Islamic Liberation Front spokesperson Eid Kabalu said Zhang was brought by his captors to South Cotabato.

Kabalu said the MILF would work for Zhang's release.

Piñol said two of the arrested suspects are related to MILF field commanders operating in North Cotabato.

"Zhang is being held by an MILF commander," he said.

"I am not saying the MILF as an organization is involved, but the fact remains Zhang is in the custody of a certain MILF leader," he said. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Surra kills 20 horses, carabaos in Negros

BACOLOD CITY—A dreaded animal disease has spread to two cities and three towns, killing 20 horses and carabaos in early July.

Badly hit by the Surra outbreak was Bago City, where seven horses and six carabaos died in the first week of this month, according to provincial veterinarian Renante Decena.

Decena said five carabaos died in Escalante town.

The animal disease also killed two horses in E.B. Magallona town.

The reported new deaths brought to 158 the total number of animals that have died of Surra since November 2000, said Decena.

A total of 138 horses and carabaos were reported to have died of the animal disease in Kabankalan City and in the towns of Ilog, Cauayan and Candoni, all in southern Negros Occidental.

Surra is caused by blood parasites called Trypanosoma that destroy the blood in lymphatic vessels and internal organs like the spleen and the bone marrow.

It is transmitted from one animal to the other by mosquitoes. Animals afflicted with Surra suffer from intermittent fever, loss of appetite, lethargy, swelling of eyes and joints, edematous portion of lower abdomen and paralysis. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Quevedo reelected president of CBCP

COTABATO CITY—Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo was reelected for a two-year term as president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

Quevedo, whose first term as CBCP president ends on Nov. 30, got 61 votes from the 70 voting members.

"I am both happy and sad," Quevedo said of his reelection, because "my time will be divided again between serving the Archdiocese of Cotabato and the whole Church in (the) Philippines."

He said he would pursue new pastoral thrusts and implement in a more systematic manner the nine pastoral priorities drawn up during the National Pastoral Consultation and Church Renewal in January.

Quevedo, who belongs to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, said the pastoral priorities focused on the promotion and defense of the family.

"Family is the most important among the pastoral thrusts of the Church in the Philippines," Quevedo told the Church-run Notre Dame Broadcasting Corp. in Cotabato City.

The other pastoral thrusts include the building of participatory communities through Basic Ecclesiastical Communities, making the Church truly a Church of the poor.

"This thrust of making the Church truly a Church of the poor is quite difficult because there are many rich people in the Church, the lifestyles, structures, values, that prevent the building of the Church of the poor," Quevedo said. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon
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Abandoning the Amerasians

BY TONETTE OREJAS
Clark Special Economic Zone

KEVIN, 11, sells banana chips daily at Clark's pedestrian gate in Angeles City in Pampanga. At a parking lot near the gate, teenagers Omi, Nancy and Dan clean taxicabs for a living.

They are Amerasians or children fathered by American soldiers assigned at Clark when it was still the biggest military base in Asia-Pacific from 1903 until 1991.

The Filipino-American Friendship Day does not mean anything to them. Sure, they remember their fathers on such a day. And yes, they have heard a lot of stories about Clark in its heydays, when greenbacks flowed to Angeles' red light district and their mothers pinned their hopes on American servicemen for a comfortable life.

"We have to scratch a living or else we starve," Kevin, a black Amerasian, says.

That there are children sired and abandoned by American soldiers and that they badly need support are truths omitted at the Clark Museum.

The museum is instead replete with relics and photos of the United States Cavalry and the US 13th Air Force that occupied some 45,000 hectares of land and transformed these into one of the biggest United States military bases in the world.

Neither is there any honest account on the children's mothers, mostly prostituted women.

"In the southern part of Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines and Thailand, the degradation of women forced into sexual labor is institutionalized in a multimillion-dollar entertainment industry that enjoys the blessing of the US military hierarchy, which considers sexual recreation vital for the 'morale' of troops," economist-historian Walden Bello wrote.

Legacy

The strips of nightclubs and bars at the periphery of the bases-turned-economic zones are telling symbols of that military legacy that sprang from Fil-Am Friendship Day, when the Philippines and the US were allies, as they are now.

The omission, intentional or not, erases the sexualized "rest and recreation" period in the country's history where a sizable disadvantaged population suffered, former Angeles Councilor Susan Pineda said.

That institutionalized enslavement, couched in the euphemism "entertainment industry," lured more than 10,000 registered prostituted women in Angeles and Olongapo cities, and an estimated 10,000 more unregistered women, men and children hookers almost four years before the bases were closed in 1991.

Their number grew every time US troops came for "liberty" or rest and recreation (R&R), according to Pineda, who is also the executive director of the women rehabilitation center IMA Foundation in Angeles.

The women had no choice. They were mostly poor migrants who sought opportunities in communities where much of the options came from base-related activities, former Olongapo mayor and SBMA chair, Richard Gordon, said.

Like their mothers, Amerasians, estimated last year at 52,000, not only deal with the question of choice. They also seek roots, confront discrimination in cities that, though already multiracial, harbor a condescending attitude toward people of color, especially blacks, and those born from disadvantaged mothers, said Alma Bulawan of Buklod Center in Olongapo.

Bulawan is a mother of an Amerasian boy, now 13.

Least helped

Yet, even as their victimization was clear, the conversion of Clark and Subic, the same bases from where the military legacy was carried out, largely failed to put these groups in the whole scheme of priorities or directly lessen the conditions that reduce their chance to rebuild their lives after the bases.

Since September 1991, when the Senate ordered Clark and Subic closed after rejecting the extension of the 1947 Philippine-US Military Bases Agreement, conversion bodies have rendered no institutionalized, focused or sustained assistance to the prostituted women, the Amerasians and their families.

Those who stood up to the task were a few local government officials and members of nongovernment organizations, interviews and reports showed.

But neither the national government nor the local government units had set up task forces or permanent offices or programs to assist them.

Separately or sometimes in a coordinated manner, local officials and NGO members filled the lack of services, when funds and opportunities were available, through skills training, livelihood projects, educational scholarships and job placements.

Prima, a former bar girl in Olongapo, sees neglect from the government.

"*Sobrang pakinabang nila sa amin noon, hindi man lang kami natulungan* (They gained so much from us then, they didn't even help us)," she said.

The likes of Prima belonged to the bulk of the service sector. In Angeles, prostituted women who registered as entertainers reached 5,640 or almost 67 percent of registered employees in 1987. In Olongapo, they totaled 5,499 or 61 percent of registered workers in the service sector.

AMERASIANS: Unforgotten legacy of US military presence in the Philippines. FILE PHOTO/JOAN BONDOC

The base actually propped up the local economy, channeled through these women. Out of the P507.2 million in base-related expenditures in 1987, P41.2 million came from US personnel on liberty, leave or temporary duty.

But the Amerasians and their mothers, like other base-dependent sectors, were again buried in the maze of generalities or overtaken by more inauspicious events.

Republic Act 7227, the base conversion law, refers to the promotion of "economic and social development of Central Luzon in particular and the country in general." It did not explicitly say who are the beneficiaries of the redevelopment of the bases.

The trend of ignoring the plight of the prostituted women and Amerasians was consistent even before the base closed because local officials were excluded from past negotiations for the bases, Gordon said.

If the social costs of the bases were raised, this was basically on how to prevent and control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases that, women's rights advocates say, US servicemen were the main carriers.

"We were used as a cannon fodder all the time they were asking more rental for the base which I thought was demeaning to us. When you seek rental for the base and then you say, as your argument, *maraming* prostitutes *sa* Olongapo, you're saying that *bayaran n'yo lang kami*, okay *na kuning mag*-prostitutes," Gordon said.

Mt. Pinatubo's eruption, the changing US military policy during the thawing of the Cold War and delayed government's conversion plan, which came only in 1990, did not allow for a gradual withdrawal of the bases or the implementation of pre-pullout plans.

But even when the local base conversion bodies were created, their community development divisions did not draw up specific long-term programs for the prostituted women and Amerasians.

Few opportunities

Amerasians, even before and after the bases closed, "have not had as many opportunities," according to a 1999 study by the University Center for Women's Studies Foundation, the Pearl S. Buck International and the Agencies Collaborating Together with Amerasians.

Finding their roots and reuniting with their fathers, or at least seeing them and seeking support was remote then and as it is now.

The Amerasian Immigration Act of 1982, which allows Amerasians from Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea to emigrate to the US under sponsorship by an American, excludes Filipino Amerasians since the Philippines was not a war zone between 1960 and 1982.

They were also not covered by a US legislation that extends special assistance in the processing of citizenship applications for Thai, Korean and Vietnamese Amerasians, because "they do not suffer discrimination in the Philippines, which in itself a racially mixed society," the study said.

A class suit that the national women's coalition Gabriela and Buklod filed in 1993 to seek the US Navy's support for medical and education expenses of the Amerasians was dismissed.

The US Assistance for International Development, however, later provided $2 million to "expand and improve humanitarian relief activities in the Philippines providing for disadvantaged children parented by US military and related personnel."

The assistance, which ended in December, was a scary prospect for prostituted women and Amerasians who have obtained credits and education support through the USAID fund, Bulawan said.

In 1995, the services available to Amerasians in Olongapo, Angeles, Bataan, Tarlac and Zambales were "inadequate," according to a Department of Social Welfare and Development survey.

The 1999 study, the last done on the Amerasians and prostituted women, gave no rosy developments either. The children still have a low level of education. Many children have experienced various forms of domestic violence while some have been sexually abused.

Some NGOs last year shifted to a family-context approach, noting that poverty gripped the families of these two groups.

Different focus

Why has not much help been directed to prostituted women and Amerasians in Clark and Subic communities despite the serious impact of military prostitution and closure of the bases on them?

"Nothing specific" was drawn for them because the "focus" of the Bases Conversion Development Authority and its local counterparts like the Clark Development Corp. and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority was "job generation and more investments to eventually get the whole communities going," said former BCDA Chair Rogelio Singson.

Pinatubo's eruption in June 1991, the worst in the world in the last century, also shifted the focus and resources of local government units, including the base conversion bodies to rescue, relief and rehabilitation programs.

While local governments had no focused, sustained or institutionalized support for the two groups, it was the same for the base conversion bodies.

Singson admitted this, saying "the measure of our program was the employment of those formerly directly employed at the base. *Yung* indirectly (employed like those in the service sector where the prostituted women used to belong) *hindi masyadong natuunan.*"

The women's group Kaisaka says that the base conversion bodies have social programs only to strengthen the viability of economic alternatives, not because the communities beyond the borders of the economic zones deserved the services.

Still in the margins

Bulawan, a former bar worker herself, said no prostituted women were hired at the zones while only a few Amerasians were employed there.

Because the base conversion bodies and LGUs were "not deliberately reaching out" to those who needed the skills training most like prostituted women and the Amerasians, they were virtually shut off from benefiting directly from the base conversion process, Bulawan said.

"We could not land good jobs there because we were not educated, we had no skills. The pay was low. We had to present so many requirements and do a lot of follow-ups that entailed money," she explained.

"We really are on our own all these years," Bulawan said. Many of them, she noted, are surviving through menial jobs.

'Gentle giants' frolic in Pangasinan waters

BY YOLANDA FUERTES
Pangasinan

ONE sunny day in May, residents and fishermen were awakened to see giant creatures in the gentle waters of Lingayen Gulf.

Not far from the shore were five "dotted animals" gracefully gliding with the calm morning waves. Excitedly, the residents boarded fishing boats to find out what the "intimidatingly big" creatures were.

What they saw enthralled them—five whale sharks *(Rhincodon typus)*, a rare species of the largest, yet gentlest, fish in the world.

For days afterward, the villagers and their visitors had the rare opportunity of playing with the "gentle giants" that came near their boats and slid underneath. Everyone who got near them was spellbound.

Usually, after summer and when the rains start to come in the afternoon, people avoid the beaches, but this time, Pangasinan's beaches are by no means deserted.

People still flock to the seashore, jump into rented fishing boats and explore the seas to take a glimpse of the *supok* (local name for whale shark).

"They are so tranquil that you can walk on their backs and still they would not be disturbed," said Westly Rosario, Dagupan research center chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Lured by food

The sea creatures have been frolicking, and eating, in the Lingayen Gulf for almost two months now.

"The plentiful food and the friendly people could have lured them to the gulf and made them stay," Rosario said.

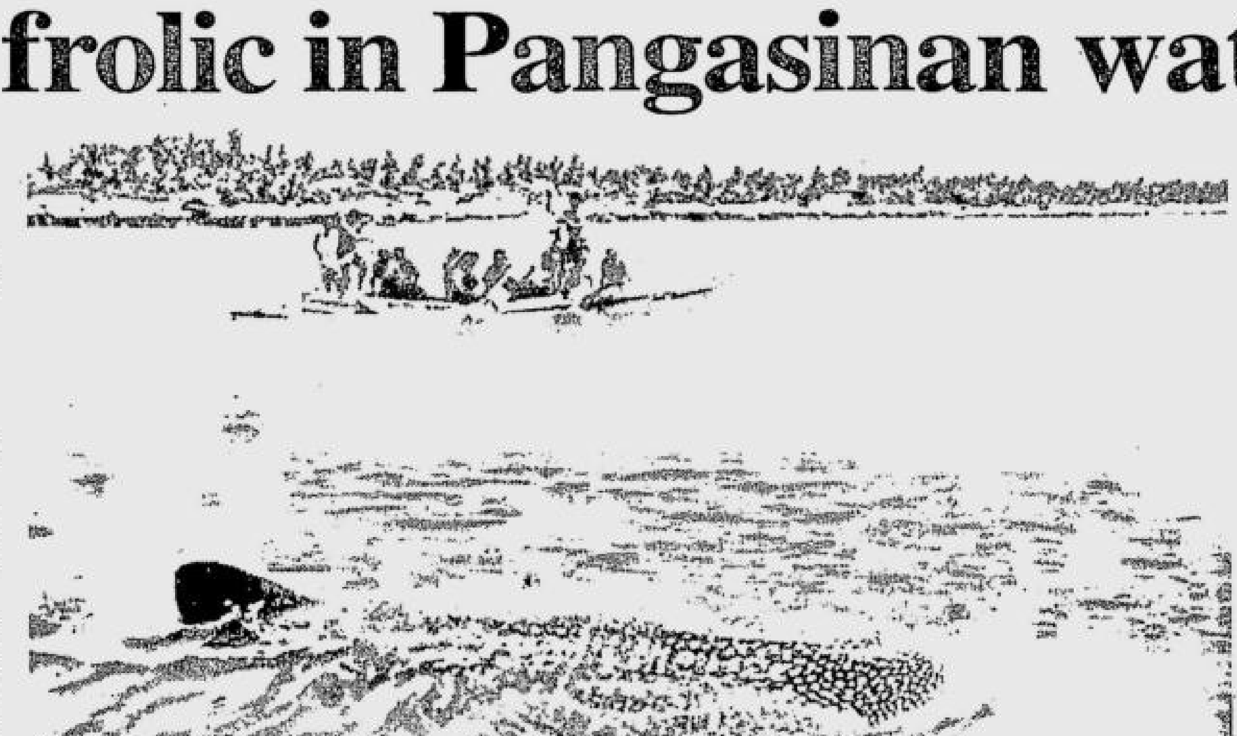
The *supok's* meal consists of planktons, small fish (anchovies), krills (small shrimps made into *alamang* or shrimp paste) and squids.

A whale shark can grow up to 50 feet (15 meters) and weigh up to 15 tons, Rosario said. Its average size is 25 feet (7.6 meters) with the females larger than the males.

The animals can live up to 150 years, sexually maturing at 30 years. They have dark skin with yellow-white spots.

The Lingayen Gulf visitors are four to five meters long and possibly weigh three tons each, Rosario said.

Giants though they are, the whale sharks have 3,000 "very tiny teeth" and cannot chew their food. They are "filter feeders," sieving enormous quantities of plankton through their gills while swimming.



A WHALE shark or supok frolic in the waters off Lingayen, Pangasinan, to the delight of residents COURTESY OF BFAR

Some fishermen have complained about "fish escaping from the fishing grounds" whenever the whale sharks come near. "Maybe they are afraid that they will be eaten by the giant fish," they said.

Because of their size, whale sharks are slow swimmers, usually at a speed of not more than three miles per hour (5 kpH).

Whale sharks survive in tropical and warm temperate seas, and their traditional homes in the country are in the waters off Donsol, Sorsogon (where they are called *butanding*) and off Bohol.

Ari Bautista, research associate of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, said whale sharks have also been seen in Honda Bay in Palawan and off Legazpi City, Cagayan de Oro City and Camarines Sur.

"They must go where there's food for them, but their presence is not reported. It's only now that sightings of these endangered species are being recorded," Bautista said.

Rosario said fishermen in the Lingayen Gulf related to him how whales, whale sharks and dolphins wandered in the gulf in the past years. Some of these rare animals, however, suffered cruel fates from humans.

Arsenio Abellera, 60, a fisherman from Binloc village in Dagupan City, confirmed that the *supoks* were traditional visitors of the Lingayen Gulf but were butchered and eaten by local folk.

But a fisherman from nearby San Fabian town said they treated the visitors with compassion.

Ricardo Rosal, 52, said they sent back the lost creatures to the sea and helped them free from their fishing nets.

Lessons from sea

Though friendly to humans, whale sharks are solitary creatures, preferring to graze alone rather than by group.

They do not mind people who get a high just by touching them, though, as if unaware that some of the supposedly "more humane" ones could be so heartless as to kill them.

Fortunately, for the five visitors, the Lingayen Gulf does not only offer food but also affection from residents and protection from authorities.

This could explain why this year they "overstayed" unlike in the past when they would just pass by.

GENTLE GIANTS/ A17

Baguio's 'angel of mercy'

GREGARIOUS barangay chair Josephine Albon, killed on Wednesday by a landslide at the height of Typhoon "Feria," could have survived, had the children she helped rescue remembered she was still behind them.

Albon, barangay chair of Pinsao Pilot Project in Baguio City, is being heralded as "an angel of mercy" when she died in the middle of a rescue mission.

She was buried alive inside the house of the Tampican family, when mud and boulders plunged 100 meters from a nearby mountain. The erosion was traced to a collapsed septic tank servicing a house she had just visited.

Lawrence Adube, chief of Baguio barangay affairs, said Albon had been busy alerting people to leave houses that were imperiled by landslides as Feria unleashed strong winds on Wednesday.

But witnesses said Albon could have survived had rescue workers and firemen managed to locate her.

They said Albon was helping the Tampican children get out of the house when the slide occurred. Killed with her were Ludovina Tampican and her eldest child Jellyn. They were among 31 people killed in Baguio due to Feria's onslaught.

"My sister was able to push the two children out of the window when the landslide occurred. When rescue workers showed up, they asked the surviving (Tampican) children if there were others inside the house. But the traumatized and visibly shocked children might have said, 'No,' so they did not rush to dig through the debris," Lorma Albon, Josephine's younger sister, said in Filipino.

Lorma said she was distraught by that piece of information.

The tale of Albon's heroism was pieced together from text messages she managed to send out before the fateful moment, when mudslides submerged the house of the Tampican family.

Her first messages described her responding to a warning that the Tampican house was in danger. Her last message, sent out at before 1 p.m. indicated that she needed immediate "back-up."

Members of Albon's own barangay rescue team got her message and proceeded immediately to the house. But they were too late.

Lorma said Albon always listened to her parents. She said one of the Albon family's golden rules was very succinct: Always lend a hand.

Cresencia Tuazon, one of Albon's buddies, said her last conversation with her friend was on Monday, but she found her listless and agitated.

"She did not even stop long enough to talk to me," Tuazon recalled.

A former varsity tennis player at the University of Baguio, Albon was described as a very "naughty" person, whose sense of humor was her most lasting trait.

Benguet Vice Gov. Edna Tabanda, a friend, said Albon often worked for other people without seeking compensation. Albon, who hailed from Benguet, left behind a brother and two sisters. ***EV Espiritu, with a report from Vincent Cabreza***

Close call on deadly Halsema Highway

By Maurice Malanes
Benguet

WINDS and heavy rains were raging mad and we were praying hard. Amid Typhoon "Feria's" fury, we were helpless and powerless. This was especially so because we were caught flatfooted along the treacherous Halsema Highway, which has been known for its typhoon-related tales of horror and death.

A RESIDENT points to the spot where barangay captain Josephine Albon was killed at the height of Typhoon "Feria's" strong rains and wind last week. Similar landslides dotted the treacherous Halsema Highway where hundreds of commuters were stranded last week. EV ESPIRITU

"Oh my God," all of us kept on muttering almost in chorus as we trekked the highway because falling rocks could hit our heads or landslides could bury us alive.

The 250-kilometer highway, also known as the Baguio-Bontoc Road, links Baguio City to Benguet and Mt. Province.

I hitched a ride with a team of officials from the International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nations Volunteer Program (UNVP) and the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) when we were stranded along the Halsema Highway at the height of the typhoon.

The team went to Bakun, Benguet, on July 3 to inspect a community project.

Awakened by heavy downpour in the morning of July 4, the team cut short its schedule and decided to return to Baguio City, leaving Bakun at 9 a.m.

We reckoned that if the eye of the typhoon hit Northern Luzon by nightfall, we could reach Baguio by midafternoon and we could warm ourselves with hot *lomi* (noodles).

But Feria's fury for several times blocked our path. The warm food and warm blankets we contemplated about turned out to be two nights and almost three days away.

We were elated that a lone payloader, operated by a daring Igorot driver, was ahead of us, clearing landslides and rocks that blocked our way. But the landslides were too many and some were too massive for the small payloader to clear before it got dark.

We managed to inch our way toward the village of Topdac in Atok town, 38 kilometers north of Baguio or 44 km from Ampusongan, Bakun, where we came from. It was already getting dark, and the payloader's operator had to retire because it was impossible for him to continue working—his machine did not have lights and had run out of fuel.

We had no choice but to spend the night on the road. Having skipped lunch, we felt the pangs of hunger and thirst by night.

Saving our day were five bottles of mineral water (one for each of us) and some soda crackers, which Antonio Triumfo, ILO-Manila's service driver, had brought with him all the way from Manila, courtesy of his wife who packed his things.

Huseyin Polat, an official of the ILO-Geneva office, also brought out some Swiss chocolates.

Our next problem was how to get some sleep.

But we were sleepless in Topdac. The howling wind and the pounding rain generated fears of falling rocks and an avalanche of soil burying us alive. Luckily, we survived the night.

By early morning, stranded motorists were queuing up for something to drink or eat at a lone *sari-sari* (variety) store in the village.

"*Ay apo, nabayag ay adi-ak nakail-ilas plato* (Oh dear me, I've not seen a plate for a long time)," said a farmer from Buguias town, referring to the three meals he missed while stranded on the road.

And the same man bewailed the provincial and local government's disaster preparedness program. "Last Monday (almost two days before the typhoon came), they (officials) were parading, campaigning for disaster-preparedness, but now this lone payloader had no crude oil and no lights," he said in Kankana-ey.

"What disaster-preparedness are they (officials) talking about?" he barked. "Pity the starving children shivering in the cold (referring to children and babies who were stranded with their parents)."

Ball of fire

It was almost 10 a.m. Thursday when the operator of the payloader resumed work. By 2 p.m., we left three big landslides, each of which was big enough to bury three buses. Together with hundreds of stranded motorists, we crawled our way to Km 21, where we had to spend the night again.

It was on this second leg of our trek when we had a close brush with death. Some men supervising the opening of the road requested us to use the ILO-Manila's vehicle—a four-wheel drive Land Cruiser—in giving light to a bigger payloader, which was working without lights in Guerrilla Saddle village in the border of Atok and Tublay towns. We readily agreed.

But we were shocked when the payloader we were following on an uphill road overheated and caught fire. For us in the vehicle, our fear was that the payloader might backtrack and hit our vehicle, and we would all burn. Or it would push our vehicle down the cliff.

Such fears could have happened because for a few seconds, the payloader was moving back toward us. Miraculously, it came to a halt because the operator was alert that he set the machine's hand brakes before he jumped off.

The situation was so shocking that our two women companions—one seated beside the driver and the other on the backseat near the right door—decided fast to jump, despite the driver's and Polat's advice for us not to panic.

Had the payloader moved back and hit our vehicle, the two women—Thelma Diwa of the Neda national office and Ruby Bañez of the UN Volunteer Program—would have been the survivors.

And the driver, Polat, who was seated near the left door in the backseat, and I, who was in the middle of the backseat, would have been the fatalities because we did not jump.

But we all survived, except for minor bruises in the head and arm of Bañez that she suffered when she stumbled after jumping for her life.

The sight of blood oozing from Bañez's head worried us at first because we didn't know the extent of the wound. And the nearest hospital in La Trinidad town was still 20 km away and that we could not get to it because of five major landslides, which were cleared only the next day.

We had Bañez checked up at the Benguet General Hospital in La Trinidad only the next day after another night on the road at Km 21 in Tublay. The doctor assured us that her injury was minor and needed only some hot-and-cold compress therapy.

But together with the other hundreds of motorists trapped, we were grateful to the heavens for we had survived 56 hours of trembling along the deadly Halsema Highway, which, we learned later, also had its share of buried fatalities during Feria's rage.

Used to the efficient transportation system in Geneva, Polat wonders how local folk survive and cope with danger each time a deadly disaster, such as Feria, strikes.

He also finds it "incredible" that a highway, most of which is actually dirt road, is so ill-maintained when it is a major road network to the heart of the Cordillera.

Polat's questions are the same ones local folk, most of them vegetable farmers, are asking from officials and political leaders, whose names are still painted on rocks and walls along the road when they were courting for votes in the last elections.

Gentle giants . . . (From page 16)

But the residents' friendliness was not there when they approached the Lingayen beach in May. During the first days at the gulf, the Philippine National Police's maritime police arrested several fishermen who were throwing dynamite sticks at the *supoks*.

"At least 13 dynamite sticks were thrown at them," the villagers reported to the Lingayen Gulf Coastal Area Management Commission.

But residents, local officials and members of the media have closed ranks to protect the gentle sea giants. Shed owners in Lingayen even tried to beat up the blast fishers who were arrested by the police.

The whale sharks are instrumental in teaching a valuable lesson to Pangasinenses—the need to protect the endangered species.

"Wherever the *supoks* are, people there would call us up, telling us to come because heartless people might harm them," Rosario said.

But as the days go by and the sea visitors do not succumb to blasting, coastal residents have learned to live harmoniously with the sea giants.

"There have been no reports of illegal fishermen trying to catch, or kill, the whale sharks now," Rosario said.

In fact, fishermen move away from where the sea creatures are to avoid hurting them with their fishing nets.

"It's against the law," Alejandro Molina, 44, a fisherman from San Fabian, said of catching the whale sharks. Earlier, he said he was gathering seaweed about 100 meters from a *supok* in the waters off Bolasi village, a tourism area.

"We just let them be. They are harmless to us and they make people happy," Molina said.

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VAL HANDUMON

JUSTICE ANACLETO BADOY: "The warning must ring loud, clear and unmistakable to one and all . . ."

JUSTICE SERAFIN CUEVAS in this file photo taken in 1999 with then President Estrada. EDWIN BACASMAS

VAL HANDUMON

A PENSIVE Edward Serapio listens intently to the arraignment proceedings at the Sandiganbayan.

'A new day has dawned,' says Badoy

(From page A1)

The clarification came after the clerk of court read the charges against "former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada also known as Asiong Salonga and also known as Jose Velarde."

Based on the information read by clerk of court Lily Biton, the elder Estrada, together with several others, allegedly connived to enrich themselves by P4 billion and received more than P500 million from illegal gambling.

The former President was alleged to have taken more than P130 million in public funds from the tobacco excise tax, influenced the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System into buying shares from Belle Corp. and hid the money under the account of Jose Velarde.

Estrada, who denies any wrongdoing, is also facing charges of graft, illegal use of an alias and violation of ethics.

No dates have been set for Estrada's arraignment on the graft and the violation of ethics charges.

The former President, wearing a white *barong*, entered the courtroom at around 2:15 p.m. accompanied by his lawyers, his wife Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito and son Jinggoy.

They were met by daughter Jackie and her husband, Beaver Lopez and Estrada son, Jude.

Estrada was seen smiling when he shook hands with Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, who showed up at the arraignment as part of the prosecution panel.

Looking angry

Estrada emerged from the courtroom looking angry.

He ushered his wife through a hallway lined with court sheriffs while waving perfunctorily to court employees before boarding a dark-colored sports utility vehicle that took him back to the military hospital where he is detained.

The former President was airlifted from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center to the Sandiganbayan at around 2 p.m.

The arraignment came after almost two hours of oral arguments on whether the court could continue with the arraignment.

Defense lawyers had maintained that they had filed a petition for certiorari before the Supreme Court yesterday morning and asked the anti-graft court to give the high court more time to resolve it.

Former Justice Secretary Serafin Cuevas, who made his first appearance as a defense lawyer yesterday, told the court that Jinggoy Estrada was questioning the validity of the Plunder Law.

The defense lawyers noted that they still have an unresolved motion asking for the production of evidence.

Their efforts to delay or postpone the arraignment came to naught.

Last-ditch attempt

Earlier in the morning, lawyers led by Pacifico Agabin and Cleofe Verzola filed with the Supreme Court a petition for a temporary restraining order to stop the arraignment.

In a 40-page petition, the lawyers claimed that the Plunder Law, as amended by the Heinous Crime Law or Republic Act 7659, was "vague and unconstitutional" and violated their client's right to due process."

"Both statutes suffer from the vice of vagueness, thus infringing on the guarantee of due process in its substantive aspect," the petition said.

The lawyers added that the law "also violates the right of the accused under the Constitution to be informed of the nature and cause of the charges against him."

The high court's en banc session ended past 2 p.m. but no decision on the petition was reached.

Supreme Court spokesperson Ishmail Khan said justices held a morning session but were unable to tackle Estrada's petition because it was not filed on time.

The refusal of the Supreme Court to tackle the petition yesterday paved the way for the arraignment proceedings.

Victory

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto hailed the decision of the Sandiganbayan to push through with the arraignment as an early victory for the people and the country's justice system.

Desierto also pointed out that the arraignment, no matter how the defense panel describes it, benefited the former head of state.

He said an early arraignment would benefit the accused because it would ensure a speedy trial.

"Can you imagine the uncertainty of the accused if their lawyers succeeded in further delaying the trial?" he said.

Militant groups also hailed the decision of the Sandiganbayan to finally arraign Estrada for plunder.

"We accept with all our heart the court's decision (to enter a plea) for Estrada. We believe that they (justices) were simply being just and that they were doing their jobs well," said Teodoro Casiño, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general.

He said civil society leaders were "generally happy" with the performance of Desierto and of the private and public prosecutors.

Also yesterday, the Sandiganbayan decided to postpone the bail hearing for Serapio whose lawyer said that their hands were tied by a motion that they had filed before the high court.

A pre-trial hearing was set for Sept. 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Media coverage was severely restricted with cameras, tape recorders and mobile telephones banned from the courtroom. The glass doors were shut but from outside Estrada lawyers could be seen making lengthy, animated addresses toward the bench.

Mock trial

While Estrada was being arraigned for a plunder, his supporters held outside the Sandiganbayan a mock trial of President Macapagal-Arroyo and other People Power II personalities for "political plunder."

"The poor believe that it should not be Erap but Ms Macapagal and her allies who should be arraigned today for conspiracy against the poor," said Arnold C. Obina, spokesperson of the Peoples' Watch for Truth and Justice (PWTJ).

"It should be Ms Macapagal and her backers that should be indicted for creating havoc in our politics and economy to justify their power grab from a legitimate presidency installed by the poor majority," Obina said.

Some 400 Estrada supporters marched on the Sandiganbayan, waving red and orange flags.

However, they did not get anywhere near the anti-graft court, which was guarded by nearly 2,000 policemen.

Around 200 members of anti-Estrada Plunder Watch alliance also held a vigil at the right front side of the court. They were dispersed earlier after they tried to stay right in front of the Sandiganbayan.

The police made sure that the pro- and anti-Estrada groups did not clash.

Obina lambasted the People Power II forces for failing to improve the country's economy.

"On the contrary, our economy is down and our political front unstable. We are experiencing rising unemployment, devaluation of the peso and rising prices of fuel and basic commodities, while the wages of ordinary people remain the same," Obina said.

"They said Erap was the problem. But look at the country's situation, it has gotten worse," Obina said.

After lunch on the sidewalk under the scorching noonday sun, the Estrada supporters proceeded with the mock trial.

Some wore costumes and impersonated Ms Macapagal, former Presidents Fidel Ramos and Corazon Aquino, and Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

The protesters also vented their ire on Chief Justice Hilario Davide and other Supreme Court justices, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, Guillermo Luz, Bayan Muna and Kompil II.

Like Estrada, the impersonators remained silent and did not enter a plea when the mock court charged them with "conspiracy for political plunder."

But the crowd shouted "Guilty! Guilty!" as each charge was read.

"Down with all of them! Feed them to the sharks!" a male protester shouted.

But despite the fiery rhetoric of their organizers, the pro-Estrada crowd remained peaceful and voluntarily withdrew after the arraignment proceedings against their idol inside the Sandiganbayan ended. ***With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Andrea Trinidad-Echavez***

Lawyers' group, deputy ombudsman at war

By Volt Contreras

WHILE prosecutors in the Estrada plunder case hailed his arraignment yesterday, two of them—an outspoken private lawyer and the No. 2 man in the Office of the Ombudsman—are having an internal war of their own.

Distrust has driven a wedge between lawyer Leonard de Vera, whose group Clear was among the complainants in the plunder charge, and Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio, the only Estrada-appointee in the public prosecution team.

In previous media interviews, Gervacio had openly accused De Vera of being a "Trojan Horse" in the roster of private prosecutors, while the latter had labeled Gervacio as the Estrada camp's "planted spy" in the prosecution panel.

In an interview yesterday, De Vera said Clear and his other newly formed Estrada trial watchdog group E-Just were now calling for Gervacio's "withdrawal" from the prosecution team.

He clarified, though, that this was "not yet" the position of the private prosecutors themselves, but only of Clear and E-Just.

He said that private lawyers had collectively agreed to at least admit to the press that "all is not well between the private and the public prosecutors."

"We had complained to Ombudsman Aniano Desierto about him (Gervacio) working with us. He seems to be screening our communications to the Ombudsman," he said.

De Vera also blamed Gervacio for "our delayed receipt of important court papers and documents, including pleadings filed by the defense."

Worse, he alleged, "we are also surprised that the defense panel was able to make preemptive actions against our planned course of action." De Vera declined to elaborate.

The rift between them, he said, started last month "when he accused me of falsely claiming that I am the official spokesperson of the private prosecution. In truth, I was really appointed (as such) in writing."

He said fellow private counsel Ricardo Nepomuceno already "corrected" Gervacio on this, but that the latter "repeated" the same charge in the media last week.

After dealing with Gervacio, the voluble De Vera had to endure another attack, this time from the Estrada political machinery, the Partido ng Masang Pilipsino.

Cuevas takes pity on ex-boss

(From page A1)

he was directly responsible for the blooper.

Cuevas eventually left the Estrada Cabinet after more disagreements involving two of the President's friends, business tycoon Lucio Tan and fugitive from American justice Mark Jimenez, now a congressman.

Cuevas admitted that he really felt bad about the Manero incident. He told reporters that it was the main reason he left the Estrada Cabinet in February 2000.

"I was not involved in graft and corruption during my stint as Cabinet secretary and yet, because of the Manero issue, *ako ang nakursunadahan* (I became the target). It was a good thing Ronnie Zamora later admitted his error," Cuevas said.

Cuevas said Zamora played a significant part in convincing him to accept Estrada's plunder case.

"President Estrada reached me through mutual friends, especially Ronnie Zamora. Erap (Estrada's nickname) wanted me to defend him and his son (former San Juan Mayor) Jinggoy," he said.

Cuevas disclosed that Estrada had even called him up to ask for forgiveness for their disagreements.

"The President said *pasensya na daw ako at tulungan ko daw siya.* Of course I took pity on him," Cuevas said.

Yesterday morning, Cuevas entered his formal appearance as defense counsel of Estrada and Jinggoy.

Asked whether he was serving as the Estradas' principal lawyer in the plunder case, Cuevas could not give a definite answer. "It depends on Erap," he responded. Reporters regularly covering the Sandiganbayan hearings noted that Cuevas attended at least two of them in the past month as an observer.

While Cuevas was still pondering whether to accept the job, he had already begun his homework—doing research on the plunder case.

Cuevas said his studies showed that Estrada was not guilty.

He said he could defend the deposed President convincingly if provided with an unbiased forum.

"Definitely, we have a chance of winning the case. Considering the evidence of the prosecution, the case cannot be considered plunder," he said.

Not plunder but indiscretion

"The case is not plunder but an indiscretion. It could be a violation of the Anti-Graft Law or the Revised Penal Code. The problem is that prosecutors quickly insisted that the charge should be plunder," Cuevas complained.

Based on his research, plunder is committed through a series or combination of schemes or processes. "So if there was a liability (in Estrada's case), it cannot be plunder if it was only one act," he said.

Cuevas, formerly associate justice of the Supreme Court, wants to be addressed as "Justice" during the plunder trial. He said he would prefer that prosecutors and defense lawyers engage in oral arguments before the Supreme Court to determine the proper charge against the former President.

"This case is a challenge and I want to participate in its epoch eventuality. The only thing that gets to me is that even if we present good arguments before the presiding judge, our motions are always turned down," Cuevas said.

The former justice secretary said he could not recall any incident while still serving the Cabinet that would point to Estrada's links to "jueteng," an illegal numbers game, as alleged by former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

"I have seen Singson come with us in several trips (to Mindanao) but that's all there is to it. There was no indication of any jueteng connection," he said.

Cuevas noted that during the impeachment trial, the evidence presented did not sufficiently prove that Estrada had connections with gambling lords.

"That's why we are starting anew with this trial. With the help of cross-examination we can ferret out the truth," he said.

Cuevas said he still felt sorry for not being able to join Estrada's defense team during his impeachment trial.

At least, he feels better by making up for it in the plunder case.

No fees

Ever the gentleman, Cuevas said he did not intend to charge Estrada legal fees.

"*Nakakahiya kay* Erap. I will not charge him anything. Any payment will depend on his magnanimity," he said.

Estrada no longer hot issue

(From page A1)

sion of Pulse Asia head, Felipe Miranda, who presented his latest survey at the Cabinet meeting at the Palace yesterday.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said that Miranda's survey showed 48 percent of Filipinos surveyed preferred to place the ousted leader under house arrest; 39 percent wanted him jailed.

"The conclusion of Professor Miranda is that he thinks Estrada is no longer a political issue. It is starting to recede as a political issue," Tiglao said.

Adding Malacañang's view, he said: "The assessment of our security people is it started to recede as a political issue. Filipinos are starting to feel that it's basically a law procedure, it's not a political process nor test but a question of implementing the laws of the land."

Tiglao made the announcement on the day Estrada was arraigned for plunder at the Sandiganbayan. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Tiglao said the police reported that there was a crowd of 500 outside the Sandiganbayan—300 pro-Estrada and 200 anti-Estrada.

Tiglao said there is no more destabilization plots "at this time."

Labor chief right; Inquirer story wrong

(From page A1)

she was pushing for a P125 increase in the daily minimum wage of workers in Metro Manila.

The readers' advocate upheld Sto. Tomas' claim that neither she nor the DOLE's information office issued such a press statement.

PDI reporter Norman Bordadora, who filed the report, could not produce a copy of the press statement at the behest of the readers' advocate. According to the reporter, his copy of the statement somehow got misplaced.

In accordance with the finding of the readers' advocate, the INQUIRER is apologizing to Sto. Tomas and its readers for whatever aggravation and anxiety the report may have caused her and other sectors.

The INQUIRER is taking action to avoid a repeat of the mistake and is holding accountable the parties responsible.

"The truth is I never uttered anything that could be construed as direct support for raising the minimum wage by P125. I haven't even said anything that could be given such interpretation," Sto. Tomas said in a letter to the INQUIRER.

In a talk with the INQUIRER, however, Sto. Tomas admitted there was a need to review the minimum wage rates in various regions due to "supervening events" that have eroded the value of workers' wages.

No preempting of wage boards

"This is a good time to review the wages because there has been a clamor for it and the fact that (prices of) basic goods have increased," she said.

Sto. Tomas said she did not want to prescribe a definite amount of increase because she did not want to preempt the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards that are mandated by law to fix wages on a regional basis.

"My position on the wage issue is that it ought to be done by the wage boards," she said. "You can't preempt this because you have to hear arguments from both sides at the regional level particularly."

So far only the Eastern Visayas wage board based in Tacloban City has received a petition for a wage increase of P20.

Sto. Tomas said Congress may approve a wage increase for workers nationwide but the rate of adjustment should vary from region to region.

"There are differentials insofar as the cost of living in the different regions are concerned," she said.

Last week, Sen. Juan Flavier filed a bill proposing a P125 increase in the minimum wage nationwide.

Opposition

But businessman Raul Concepcion, chair of the Federation of Philippine Industries, warned that congressional approval of a P125 across-the-board wage increase would be disastrous to the economy.

Concepcion said any wage increase should be based on how much prices had gone up since the last minimum wage adjustment in November 2000.

At least 10 business groups in Cebu have also written President Macapagal-Arroyo to express their concern over a government-mandated wage increase.

"Any wage increase at this time will lead to the closure of companies, especially small- and medium-scale enterprises, both in the export zones and in the region," they said in their letter to the President.

Elberto Emphasis, presidential liaison officer for Central Visayas, yesterday said some companies at the Mactan Economic Zone threatened to relocate to China if the proposed wage hike would push through.

Leyte and Iloilo businessmen have also raised similar concerns.

"At this time, most businesses cannot afford that (P125 increase) and if possible there should not be any increase," said Marissa Segovia, president of the Iloilo Business Club (IBC), the first regional affiliate of the Makati Business Club.

"Our businesses would be heavily affected by any increase and we won't be able to employ anyone at such an expensive rate," said Ramon Cua-Locsin, vice president of the Fil-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Panay.

The Leyte Chamber of Commerce and Industry warned that the proposed wage increase, if approved, would lead to the shutdown of many companies in Eastern Visayas.

Exaggerated

But former Sen. Ernesto Herrera dismissed projections of mass layoffs as "grossly exaggerated."

On the average, he said, labor costs account for only about 5 percent of the total cost of production in most industries.

Herrera said any layoffs in the coming months would be triggered mainly by the peso's fall against the dollar, which is hurting import-intensive firms as well as those with large dollar-denominated debts.

"These firms will retrench workers anyway, whether or not there will be a wage increase. So they should be factored out," Herrera said.

The militant Kilusang Mayo Uno reiterated its call for the abolition of the wage boards, saying these no longer served the workers' interests.

"They (wage boards) are dominated by big business groups allergic to wage increases. Their main function is to ensure that workers' wages remain nailed to the floor and all wage increases will be so small that they'll barely make a dent on capitalists' profits," KMU spokesperson Sammy Malunes said.

He said the KMU would not submit any petition to the wage boards.

The fisherfolk group Pamalakaya said the battle for wage increases had shifted to Congress.

"The failure of regional wage boards to address the demand will send the workers back to the streets and press Congress to act on their just call for higher wages," it said. ***Reports from Gerald G. Lacuarta and Andrea Trinidad-Echavez in Manila; and Irene R. Sino-Cruz, Jhunnex Napallacan and Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau***

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ■ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Biag, Emperado outwit rivals

TOP seed Ivan Gil Biag of Cavite and second seed Emmanuel Emperado of St. James College of Parañaque shared the lead in the second round of the Little Chess League training tournament held over the weekend at the 2/F Center Mall, Greenhills Shopping Center. The 12-year-old candidate master Biag forced MJ Turqueza to resign in 39 moves of a French defense while 14-year-old Emperado prevailed over Abigail Rivas in 46 moves of a Queen's Pawn game. Games resume on Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

GOLF: LPGA Jamie Farr Kroger Classic, Second Round at 7 a.m. (r) on ESPN

PGA Advil Western Open, Third Round at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

BASKETBALL: 2001 ABC Champions Cup, Preliminary Round at 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Star Sports

CYCLING: 2001 Tour De France Highlights Stage #3 at 1:30 p.m. (r – 7:30 p.m.) on ESPN

BOXING: Behind the Fights - Madison Square Garden Fights Part II at 10:30 p.m. on ESPN

CASAS PLAYING

CAP-Legends Classic on tomorrow

CASAS

PHILIPPINE Open champion Cassius Casas will tee off as the hands-down favorite when the new local professional tour resumes tomorrow with the College Assurance Plan-Legends Classic at the Southwoods Legends.

Richer by more than P1.5 million following his Open victory two weeks ago at Wack Wack, the 34-year-old Casas faces local challengers led by Danny Zarate, second-placer in the P9.5-million NGAP-organized Open, in the P700,000 Southwoods event.

The tour's main sponsor, the College Assurance Plan, will again bankroll the fifth stop after previous legs at Southwoods Masters, Camp John Hay, Sherwood Hills and Forest Hills.

"We know for a fact that our pros are in the peak of their games following their Philippine Open campaign. So we can expect a lot of action and drama unfolding on the fairways and greens each round," said lawyer Enrique Sobrepeña, president and CEO of CAP.

The CAP support includes prize packages for the seniors, the super seniors, the pro-am and the amateurs.

A total of P500,000 will be disputed in the regular division, P60,000 for the seniors (50 years and above), P20,000 for the super seniors and P25,000 in the pro-am.

The Legends will undertake a re-greening using the TifEagle grass after this week's tournament.

"In a way, it's also a fitting tribute to the course that contributed a lot to the growth of Fil-Estate as a force in the property sector," said Bob Sobrepeña, chair of both the Manila Southwoods and the Philippine Tour.

The Legends is the first signature course of Jack Nicklaus in the country. It hosted the John Daly-Tom Kite duel in 1992, two Philippine Opens (1993-96) and the World Amateurs in 1996.

Others out to challenge Casas are deposed Open champion Gerald Rosales and leg winners Rey Pagunsan (MRT-Southwoods Open), Antonio Lascuña (Ericsson-Smart Classic at Sherwood Hills), Richard Sinfuego (John Hay Open) and Danny Zarate (CAP-Forest Hills Classic).

Purefoods, SMB seek Final 4

GAMES TODAY
(Philsports)
5:15 p.m. – Purefoods vs Tanduay
7:30 p.m. – San Miguel vs Ginebra

PBA STANDINGS

	W	L
SMB	5	2
Purefoods	5	2
Red Bull	5	2
Alaska	4	4
Sta. Lucia	4	4
Ginebra	4	3
Mobiline	3	4
Pop Cola	3	5
Tanduay	2	5
Shell	2	6

BY MARC ANTHONY REYES

A STINT in the elite Final Four cast is what San Miguel Beer and Purefoods seek today when they square off with Barangay Ginebra and Tanduay Gold, respectively, in the PBA Commissioner's Cup at Philsports.

Tied for the lead with idle Batang Red Bull, victories by the Beermen and the Hotdogs would give them the twice-to-beat slots in the quarterfinals outright.

Purefoods, its existence uncertain at the moment, has strung up five victories thus far going to its 5:15 encounter with Tanduay.

San Miguel goes up against sister Ginebra at 7:30 p.m.

"This is a testament to the team's maturity and ability to rise up to the challenge," said Purefoods coach Eric Altamirano. "Although our future remains uncertain, we won't just roll over and die. That's what you call professionalism."

The PBA board has yet to decide on the fate of Purefoods, which has been recently acquired as San Miguel Corporation's third team in the PBA.

The league has no existing rules on the number of franchises a member-corporation is allowed to own.

Ironically, after losing to "sister teams" San Miguel and Ginebra, the Hotdogs went on a rampage that began almost a month ago with a 65-54 win over Sta. Lucia.

Jalasco's gambit

FREDDIE Jalasco, the country's chief of mission to the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games, yesterday said he would form a temporary basketball lineup to beat the July 15 deadline. Jalasco said the lineup could still be altered two days before the Sept. 8 tournament proper or during the time when the member-countries hold the managers' meeting. Olympic president Celso Dayrit agreed with Jalasco's idea. But Dayrit said he preferred an early solution to the conflict between BAP "presidents" Lito Puyat and Tiny Literal before a team could be finally formed. *June Navarro*

Gems' luck staked vs Patriots

Games Today (Cebu City Coliseum)
3:00 p.m.—Socsargen vs Davao
5:30 p.m.—Nueva Ecija vs Cebu

BY ROY LUARCA

THE CEBUANA Lhuillier Gems' invincibility at home will again be tested when they tangle with the Nueva Ecija Patriots at 5:30 p.m. today.

Inspired by the spirited crowd, the Gems have won all of their five games at the Cebu City Coliseum and, with a 6-3 card, will be gunning for a share of the lead in the Metropolitan Basketball Association First Phase.

Fresh from a 116-104 vengeful conquest of the FedEx Laguna Lakers last Sunday, the Gems are favored over the skidding Patriots.

Matthew Mitchell will again be on the forefront of the Gems' bid to catch up with the Negros Slashers and the Andok's San Juan Knights.

Showing versatility, Mitchell finished with 30 points, 14 rebounds, 8 assists, 5 blocks and 4 steals for the Gems, who are unbeaten in their first five games at home. Additional firepower would come from Peter Naron, Homer Se, Stephen Padilla and Al Solis.

The 6-foot-6 Mitchell and the 6-5 Se are again expected to dominate the shaded lane against the Patriots, whose top rebounder is 6-4 Dave Bautista.

Pangilinan breaks silence

MANNY V. Pangilinan, the PLDT boss who owns Mobiline in the PBA, broke his silence yesterday in the ongoing leadership rift in the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Pangilinan had been earlier named as the best person to mediate between warring factions of Lito Puyat and Tiny Literal.

"But for a compromise to materialize, the (Puyat and Literal) parties must be prepared to make sacrifices. If the parties are not willing to make sacrifices, we might as well forget the whole exercise."

The BAP was suspended recently by the World Basketball Federation (Fiba) for failing to resolve the leadership tussle between BAP "presidents" Puyat and Literal.

In trying to resolve the dispute, Pangilinan has suggested that both sides agree to form a team for the SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur, and to craft a mutually acceptable statute that would lead to the election of BAP officials with an unquestionable mandate.

Puyat had agreed to both, but Literal said he wanted first to know the members of the steering committee headed by Pangilinan before making a decision.

SPORTSWATCH

'Eagles Night' at The Fort

ALUMNI, parents and friends of the Ateneo de Manila University will launch the "Booster Club" today at 6:30 p.m. at the NBC Tent, The Fort, in an evening called the "Eagles Night." The Booster Club is designed to support the sports program of Ateneo—basketball, football, volleyball, track and field, baseball, softball, chess, fencing, judo, taekwondo, swimming, badminton, table tennis, lawn tennis and cheerleading. Mr. Manuel V. Pangilinan, PLDT CEO/president, is the Booster Club's chair. Call 426-6081–82, 426-6001 loc. 4190 and 4191 for more details. Dinner will be served at 7 to be followed by a program featuring the Ateneo Athletes. The Ateneo HS '77 Brass Band and the Spirit of Sixty-Seven will provide the evening's entertainment.

BEST Center registration

REGISTRATION is still going on for the Milo BEST Center's Saturday-and Sunday-only classes at Ateneo College covered courts and St. Benedict College, respectively. Level 1, 2 ,3 and 4 sessions at Ateneo are scheduled from July 7 to Aug. 25 from 8 to 11 a.m. Level 1, 2 and 3 clinics at St. Benedict are slated from July 8 to Aug. 26 from 1 to 4 p.m. Interested boys and girls may call The BEST Center, tel. nos. 411-6260 and 372-3065/66 for more details.

2 titles each for Diez, Adaza

CAGAYAN de Oro City—Ed Angelo Diez of Davao whipped Alexis Lapaz, 6-2, 6-0, to bag the boys' 16-under division then tripped Duma Boloto, 6-4, 6-1, to pocket the boys' 14-under bracket in the Adidas Tennis Challenge here. Patricia Adaza of Mati, Davao Oriental, also became a double winner by beating Jasper Cabisog, 6-4, 6-3, in the girls 16-under and Irene Serito, 6-4, 6-3, in the girls 14-under in the netfest organized by CTW and supported by Milo and Sports Kids. On hand to award the Adidas trophies was club vice president Sammy Cheng.

Bon voyage Bata Reyes & Co.

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE STAR-STUDDED 2001 World Pro Pool Championship in Cardiff, Wales, on July 14-22 has long been circled on their calendar since Efren "Bata" Reyes won the prestigious title in 1999.

And their long trip begins today when members of the popular Philippine-Puyat Sports team, headed by Reyes himself, leave for London en route to the Cardiff International Arena, site of the keenly awaited tournament which features the world's leading 9-ball billiards artists.

"The players are ready to do battle," said chummy team manager Rollie Vicente. "We've trained too hard and traveled too far to let up now. We've got to do a good job in Cardiff because that's what we're coming there for."

In this year's World Pool Championship, 44 countries will be sending a total of 128 cue artists, including eight Filipinos, to the competition covered live on television by ESPN. With Reyes in the Philippine team are Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat, Leonardo "Dodong" Andam, Ramil "Bebeng" Gallego, Warren Kiamco, Antonio "Nickoy" Lining and Canada-based Alex Pagulayan who is registered as a Canadian entry.

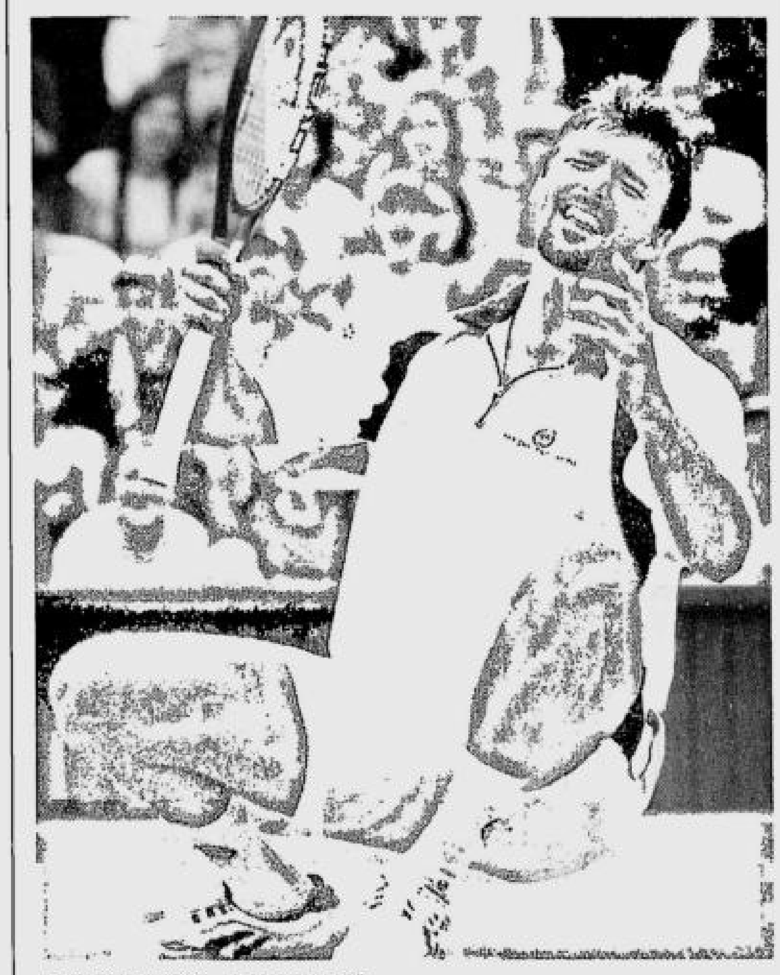
Among the Filipino hopefuls, Gallego faces the most daunting task because he is bracketed in Group 1—considered as the tournament's toughest—with defending champion Fong Pang-chao of Taiwan. But Gallego, a native of Bacolod City, is unfazed: He is banking on his vast experience and past achievements, notably in the Asian billiards scene. In 1997, Gallego won the Asian Championship in Taiwan. Much earlier, he topped the 1992 and 1994 All-Japan Championships in Osaka and captured the 1993 Japan Open in Tokyo.

Of course, Reyes, Bustamante, Luat, Andam and Lining need no further introduction.

"They are the best at present," said Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, young brother of Jose "Popit" Puyat, the other half of billiards longtime benefactors. "Let's all wish them luck and pray for their success."

The most dominant player in recent billiards history, Reyes should be (he isn't listed yet as this was being written) in the roster of Filipino athletes that will compete in the Southeast Asian Games in Kuala Lumpur this September. Reyes (and Andam for that matter) richly deserved a place in the RP delegation having won several gold medals in previous SEA Games. Reyes won the gold medal in 1999 in Brunei and 1987 in Jakarta while Andam clinched four golds in 1991 in Manila.

By carrying the colors in Kuala Lumpur, Reyes will be skipping the US Open which is also billed in September, in the process missing the golden chance to win a fortune. But his main goal is to win the SEA Games gold and not to win that pot of gold in America.



A WINNER, FINALLY REUTERS

Crotia's Goran Ivanisevic celebrates after beating Pat Rafter of Australia to win the men's final of the Wimbledon yesterday in London. Ivanisevic, the losing finalist in 1992, 1994 and 1998, beat Rafter, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 2-6, 9-7.

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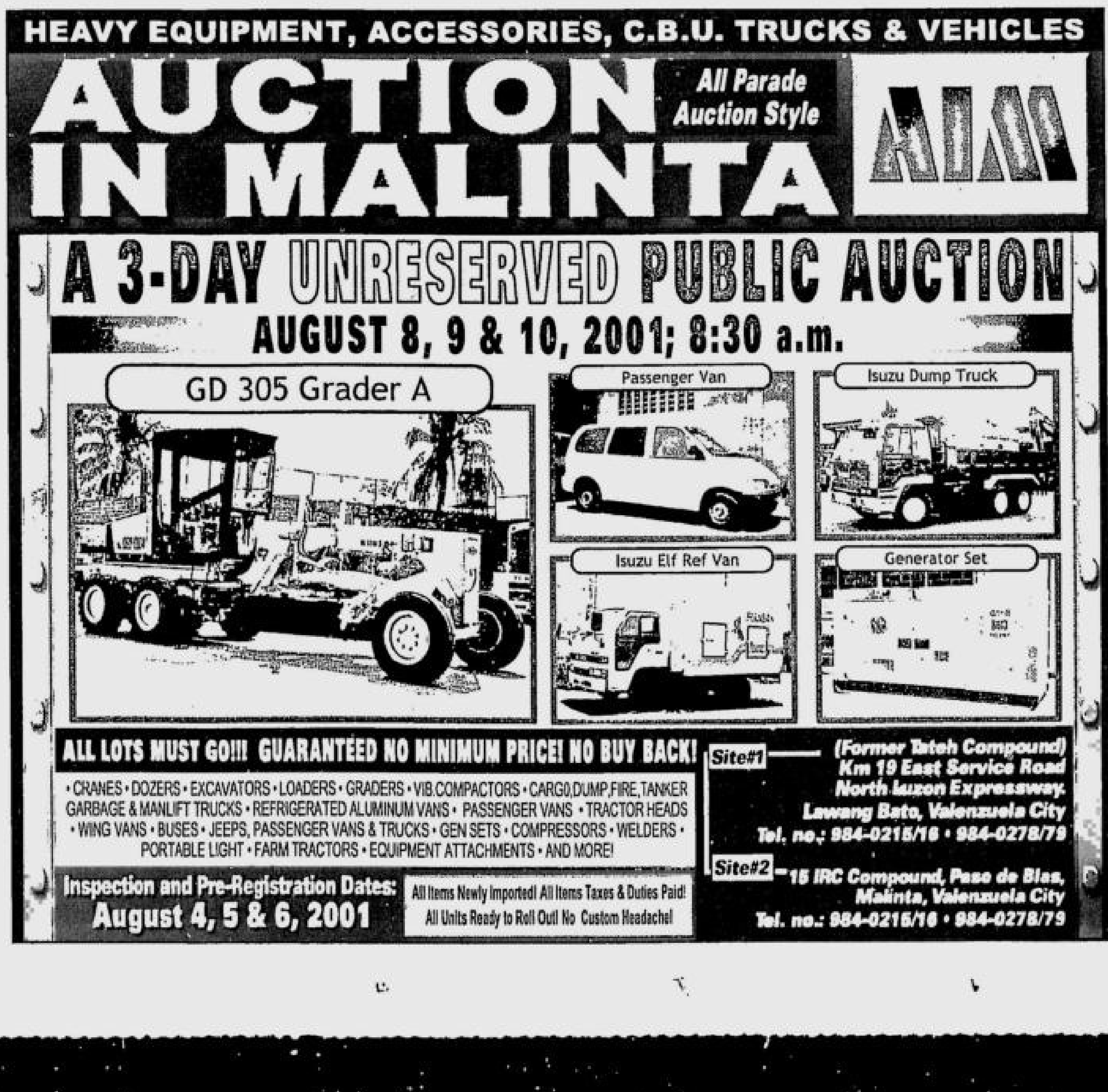

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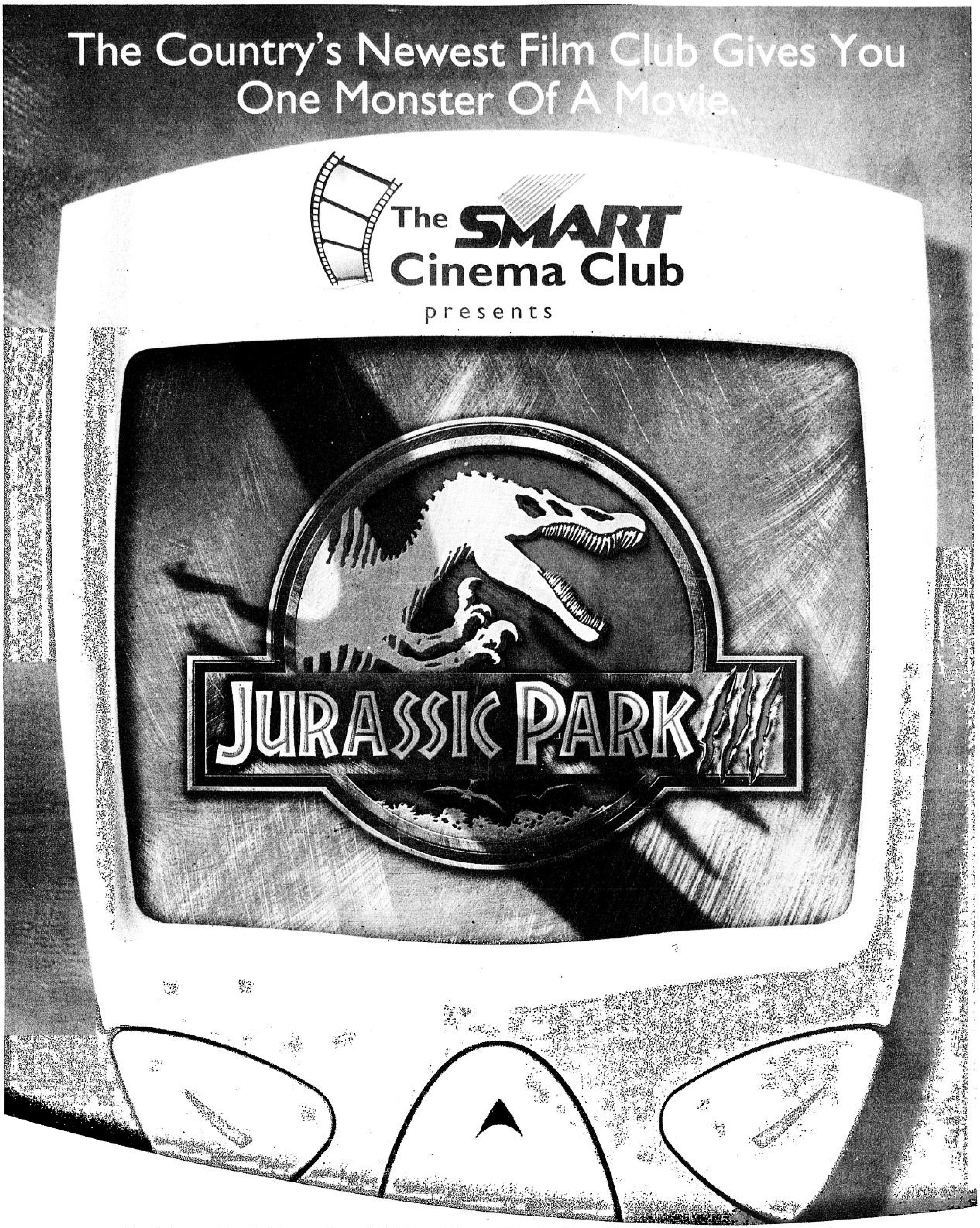

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■ 14-year-old Vietnamese boy dies in Tondo fall A22
■ 6 nabbed for highway rob A22

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

■ Land swap considered for Mehan Garden A22

1-M signature campaign against ROTC launched

BY ANDREA TRINIDAD-ECHAVEZ

PROTESTS against the Reserved Officers Training Corps continued to mount as youth groups on Monday started to collect 1 million signatures as part of the campaign to abolish the military training program.

In a press conference in Quezon City, convenors of Abolish! (Network for the Abolition of ROTC) vowed to fight the program "head-on, chins up, stomachs in and chests out" until it has been scrapped.

The youth organizations include Anakbayan, League of Filipino Stu-

1-M SIGNATURE/ A22

PAYATAS PRAYERS
Relatives—mostly children—of more than 200 people who died in the July 10, 2000 landslide in the Payatas dump in Quezon City—yesterday lighted candles and prayed at a memorial near the site of the tragedy. In an Associated Press story, a 59-year-old woman who survived but who lost a sister in the collapse described the slide: "It was a boom and a grrr and a smash. It hurt my ears. I always cry and cry now." *(Story on page A4)* EDWIN BACASMAS

Equitable-PCI Bank robbed

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

TWO MINUTES was all it took yesterday noon for seven heavily armed men to rob an Equitable-PCI Bank branch on Aurora Boulevard near Balete Drive in Quezon City.

In Caloocan City also at noon yesterday, four armed men robbed businesswoman Connie Co, who was about to deposit an undetermined amount of money at a Metrobank branch on Edsa.

The Equitable-PCI Bank robbers are members of the "Waray-Waray" gang, said Supt. Raul Medina, chief of the Central Police District Criminal Investigation Division.

Investigators said two of the suspects sneaked into the bank as the branch supervisor was about to enter the building.

Police said two other suspects followed and took the .38 revolver of security guard Joel Refugia. The other guard was taking his lunch upstairs, police said.

The rest of the suspects served as lookouts and waited in a dark blue Mitsubishi Adventure van (WGK-960). The suspects escaped toward Sta. Mesa in Manila on board the van, police said.

No shots were fired during the robbery, police said. The robbers were also not able to get into the bank's vault.

In Caloocan City, four armed men who were on board two motorcycles blocked Co's red Toyota Corolla (TLN-687) on B. Serrano Street near Edsa, police said.

The suspects then smashed a window of the car, took Co's bag containing the cash at gunpoint and sped off, police said.

Co told police she was supposed to deposit the money in a nearby branch of Metrobank.

EQUITABLE/ A22

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WEDNESDAY JULY 11 912-8983

Land swap considered for Mehan Garden

By Jerome Aning
and Cynthia Balana

AN ALTERNATIVE to Mehan Garden as the site of the new campus of the City College of Manila (CCM) may have been found.

But conservationist and environmentalist groups seeking to save Mehan Garden would have to convince tourism officials to agree to swap for Mehan the campus of the old Ateneo de Manila in Intramuros, which is under the auspices of the Intramuros Administration, an agency of the Department of Tourism.

Earlier, Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez formed a search team after City Hall and groups opposing the Mehan Garden construction agreed to look for an alternative site.

Lawyer Trixie Angeles of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts yesterday said the search team is expected to meet anytime this week with officials of the tourism department to discuss the land-swap possibility.

The team is composed of representatives of the city government, the NCCA, the National Historical Institute, the National Museum and private conservationist and environmentalist groups.

Under the deal, the Ateneo site would be converted into a new campus for the CCM, and the DOT would develop Mehan Garden as a historical site for tourism.

"City officials and concerned sectors need not clash on this issue because they all share the common goal of wanting the best for the Manileños by imparting knowledge, the lessons of history and the gifts of our culture and heritage,'' Alvarez said.

Last week, Alvarez issued a cease and desist order on the P181-million MCC construction at Mehan Garden. The order cited violations of provisions of the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) issued earlier, particularly the cutting and pruning of trees at the Mehan Garden.

Groups opposed to the construction of the city college want the 24,600-square-meter Mehan Garden to remain a public park to preserve its historical and cultural significance as the first botanical and zoological garden of Manila, established in 1858.

City Hall said building a school on Mehan Garden would create human activity that will enhance and preserve its significance. They said the old CCM campus, the former Philippine National Bank on Escolta in Sta. Cruz, is deteriorating.

Alvarez also expressed "oneness" with the non-government organizations that had vehemently opposed the construction of the CCM and a parking facility at Mehan Garden. He stressed that "a historic site by itself serves as a powerful non-formal educational institution."

He also called on Congress to come up with a comprehensive national legislation listing sites to be protected, identifying protective measures and guidelines, providing incentives for the protection of historical sites and cultural landscapes, as well as outlining a national management system for the protected areas.

14-year-old Vietnamese boy dies in Tondo fall

By Jerome Aning

A 14-YEAR-OLD Vietnamese who was apprehended for illegal fishing died after he reportedly fell off the Philippine Coast Guard building at the Parola Compound in Binondo, Manila Monday afternoon.

But police investigators have yet to rule out foul play in the death of Pham Minh Le because no one actually saw him fall off the PCG-National Capital Regional Office building about 6:45 p.m.

SPO1 William Gondranios said investigators found no footprints or skid marks on the floor and the ledges of the "rail-less" terrace from where Pham was supposed to have slipped.

Several people in the office saw Pham when he was already on the ground, bleeding and squirming. They brought him to the Ospital ng Maynila where the boy died two hours later.

According to Coast Guard personnel interviewed by police, the boy either fell off accidentally or committed suicide. But SPO1 Gondranios said the boy could have been murdered.

Police learned that Pham was among nine Vietnamese caught fishing in Philippine waters near Corregidor Island on April 6.

The nine were arrested and detained at the PCG office for illegal fishing. The remaining fishermen are now awaiting repatriation.

Homicide police have asked the Vietnamese Embassy to allow them to conduct an autopsy on Pham's remains.

2 drunken men throw girl up in the air

TWO men are facing criminal charges before the Caloocan city prosecutor's office for nearly killing a 10-year-old girl by tossing her in the air for no apparent reason.

Police identified the suspects as Rolando Darden, 58, and Ernesto Quival, both residents of Caloocan.

For no apparent reason, a heavily drunken Quival threw Melody Lemos in the air when he chanced upon her playing with other children in a pedicab in Tupda Village, Sangandaan, investigation showed.

When the girl tried to break free, Darden tripped her, police said.

Village watcher Enrique Padernal arrested the suspects.

Christian V. Esguerra

Life for rapist guard

By Christian V. Esguerra

A MALABON judge yesterday sentenced to life imprisonment a security guard for raping a housewife in front of her year-old son last year.

Judge Benjamin Aquino Jr. found Hansel Lagavista, 24, guilty of raping the 23-year-old victim in her house on June, 3, 2000.

Lagavista was a security guard of Cosmos Bottling Corp. on MacArthur Highway, Barangay Potrero, Malabon.

The court ordered Lagavista to pay the victim P100,000 in damages.

According to court records, Lagavista sneaked into the woman's house and raped her while her son was sleeping beside her.

The door was left open by the woman's husband when he left for work.

Lagavista concealed his face with an undershirt and introduced himself to the woman as Jun Perez.

The woman was forced to give in to Lagavista when he threatened to kill her son with a knife.

But before he left, Lagavista uncovered his face upon the woman's request.

The victim later identified Lagavista in a police lineup as the one who had raped her.

In his defense, Lagavista insisted the woman agreed to have sex with him because they were allegedly lovers.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wedenesday, July 11, 2001
14th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: **Gen 41:55-57; 42:5-7, 17-24**
Gospel: **Mt 10:1-7**

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over the unclean spirits to drive them out and to heal every disease and sickness.

These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, the man who would betray him.

Jesus sent these twelve on mission with the instruction: "Do not visit pagan territory and do not enter a Samaritan town. Go instead to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.

Go and proclaim this message: The kingdom of heaven is near."

Commentary

Today's reading is the beginning of the mission discourse that covers the whole of chapter ten. As in chapter five, the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew uses solemn language. Representatives are chosen from the whole of Israel. Just as there are twelve tribes in Israel, so there are twelve apostles. To highlight their prominence they are mentioned individually by name. Matthew makes it a point to emphasize that they are disciples of the master. The same authority that Jesus received from his Father is conferred on them. They in their turn have to learn to redefine authority in the same way Jesus did. It is the authority of the kingdom of God, the authority of God's compassion.

We thank you Father for having chosen us to be disciples of Jesus. Teach us to listen to his Word and to remain faithful to our mission.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Evident premeditation—For evident premeditation to aggravate a crime, there must be proof, as clear as the evidence of the crime itself, of the following elements: (1) the time when the offender determined to commit the crime; (2) an act manifestly indicating that he clung to his determination; and (3) sufficient lapse of time, between determination and execution, to allow himself to reflect upon the consequences of his act. For this circumstance to be appreciated, there must be direct evidence showing a plane or preparation to kill or proof that the accused meditated and reflected upon his decision to kill the victim. Here, there is no such determination of calculation and previous resolution on the part of the three accused. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, People v. Baltar, Jr., G.R. No. 125306, December 11, 2000].

Digest by R.B. Vera

Sorry, but President Macapagal was very busy

Bare Eye

Recah Trinidad

IF she could go out to meet, and even shake hands, with Norberto Manero, how come she couldn't give protesting national athletes a few seconds of her time?

The caller, my favorite pundit, wasted no time. He promptly zeroed in on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who on Monday refused to dialogue with national athletes and a few self-styled leaders who marched to Malacañang.

The group wanted to ventilate its grievances and at the same time seek changes in the national sports leadership.

Main target was Philippine Sports Commissioner chair Carlos Tuason, an Erap Estrada appointee who managed to hold on mainly on the backing of his first cousin, Mike Arroyo, the President's husband.

Well, from the look of things, Tuason, using as hostage the Philippine participation in the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games, would not be yanked out despite an outrageous record.

Malacañang has made it known it would wait for the results of the forthcoming SEA Games before effecting changes in the national sports hierarchy.

Tuason, who together with POC president Celso Dayrit tried to stop the march to Malacañang, also succeeded in explaining that they have been attending to the needs of national athletes.

* * *

That's the main point that the marchers wanted to contest.

Unfortunately, the President was obviously not in the mood to verify for herself the charges and the counter-charges.

She instead sent out an assistant to deal with the group.

For the record, it was the second straight time the President had snubbed the group that, this time, included the outspoken, very visible running priest Roberto Reyes.

First time out GMA sent out Renato de Villa to deal with the protesting national athletes.

De Villa listed the group's demands, promised prompt reforms that predictably were never carried out.

De Villa has since gotten sick and been replaced as executive secretary.

On Tuesday, President Macapagal fielded in an even lower-ranked assistant to meet the marchers.

* * *

Well, in fairness to the President, she did not have to offer an explanation for the latest snub.

Monday was a terribly busy day. She had to motor to Payatas, meddle with the raging leadership battle in both houses of Congress, wrestle with the badly crippled economy, send out commendations for the captors of a top Abu Sayyaf leader, Commander Global, said to be the think-tank of the rebel group. Her schedule was terribly tight.

Meanwhile, the frustrated athletes group retreated, again to lick its wounds.

In desperation, there came suggestions that, next time out, they should not bother to be accompanied by a priest but instead invite somebody as big and as bombastic as Manero to lead them to Malacañang.

That way, it was hinted, they would readily get the attention and time of our very busy head of state.

* * *

As this developed, several names, including that of athletics chief Go Teng Kok, cropped up.

But really, the poll for the most notorious candidate to lead the march to Malacañang was topped by Tiny Literal, an Ateneo University basketball Hall-of-Famer.

And all that Literal—whose previous selfish moves included frustrating the sincere basketball leadership compromise brokered by tycoon Manny Pangilinan—had to do was demand foregoing Philippine participation in the KL SEA Games basketball championship.

His reason: It's already too late as the deadline for the submission of entries will be on Sunday, July 15.

Literal made a bold claim that it would be a waste of time sending a basketball team to the SEA Games considering the very limited time in which to prepare. He said he would rather avoid further embarrassment than field a ragtag team. "*Mabuti pa huwag na lang magpadala ng* team, *kesa matalo tayo at lalo pa tayong mapahiya*," he told reporters.

Well, I have always had a high regard for Ateneans. But, in this case, Literal betrayed a shallow mind in overlooking the basic fact that the submission of entries and the completion of lineups are not one and the same thing.

Considering the quality of basketball competition in the SEA Games, the Philippines has more than enough time to complete a team that could go solidly for the gold.

And hasn't Literal's group always claimed that it has a team ready and willing to participate not only in the SEA Games but in the ABC championship as well?

Anyway, with his shallow, notorious stand, maybe Literal has already earned a pass to have an audience with President Macapagal.

Or should GMA, if she really cares, request her husband, Attorney Mike, to step in and settle the hideous national basketball leadership mess?

This could also be one way to show she cares and knows her sports.

GMA honors ex-diplomat

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will confer the Gawad Mabini Award with the rank of Dakilang Kamanong on former Foreign Undersecretary Tomas R. Padilla tomorrow morning at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The award will be given to Padilla for his "edifying example, devotion to duty and integrity" during 40 years of service in the department.

Padilla is also being cited for promoting the national interest in his assignments and for advancing bilateral and international understanding as consul general in Chicago from 1971 to 1973, chargé d'affaires in Beijing in 1982, consul general in Kobe from 1982 to 1986, and ambassador to Seoul from 1986 to 1990.

Padilla occupied other diplomatic posts in Berne, London, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Madrid and held other ranking positions in the home office before his retirement in 1997.

Project HOPE

THE CARDIAC Rehabilitation Section of the Philippine Heart Center is expanding its services by putting up a cardiac rehabilitation program specifically for heart failure patients.

The program, called Project HOPE (Health Optimization through Prevention and Exercise), is designed to address the needs of this high-risk group through exercise training, health education and improving quality of life.

Patients attend closely supervised exercise and group discussions twice a week for two months, with quarterly follow-ups for one year.

Project HOPE, to be launched formally on July 19 at the MAP Hall of the Philippine Heart Center, is headed by Dr. Marisa P. Joson. For further information, contact the Cardiac Rehabilitation Section at 925-24-01 (office hours only).

Equitable ...

From page A21)

Both bank robberies happened as a number of the members of Metro Manila's police force were deployed in key areas of the metropolis to ensure the security during disgraced President Estrada's arraignment on plunder charges.

Many police officers from the CPD and the Northern Police District were deployed at the Sandiganbayan in Fairview, Quezon City where the arraignment took place

6 nabbed for highway rob

By Dave M. Veridiano

POLICE intelligence agents yesterday arrested six suspected members of a big hijacking syndicate who intercepted a cargo truck loaded with about P5 million worth of computer chips in Cabuyao, Laguna last month.

The suspects were caught by agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) who had been working on the case since the hijacking took place on June 16 in Barangay Pulo, Cabuyao.

Chief Supt. Nestorio Gualberto, CIDG director, identified the suspects as Lam Wing Yeung, alias Mr. Lim, a Hong Kong national and the alleged leader-financier of the group; Rolando Relador, Emiliano Santiago, Ben Morales, his wife Teresa, and their son Ben Jr.

Gualberto said the suspects were all responsible for the hijacking of a delivery truck containing the computer parts owned by Fastech Philippines Products (FPP).

Police said the delivery truck (WLT-520) was carrying 52 boxes of computer chips when the armed men intercepted it on the highway in Cabuyao.

Helper Joseph Coralde resisted and was killed while driver Roger Malilong was able to escape.

Gualberto said Malilong reported the hijacking to the police and positively identified Relador, Oscar Cañon Sr. and Ernesto Dordas as the ones who hijacked the truck.

Cañon Sr. and Dordas remain at large.

Police learned that the three men were all security guards at FPP and employed by Lockheed Security Agency on Quezon Avenue in Quezon City.

Police caught Relador in Barangay Palo Alto in Calamba. Four handguns were seized from him.

'Later, police arrested Santiago in an entrapment operation in Lagro, Quezon City. Santiago allegedly bought the FPP products.

The elder Morales was also arrested, as well as his wife Teresa and their son Ben Jr.

CIDG agents said they recovered several boxes of electronic circuit devices and transistors manufactured by different electrical and semiconductor companies. These were packed in big boxes and were to be flown to Hong Kong.

The CIDG agents arrested Lam Wing Yeung, said to be the gang's financier. Police said Lam, during interrogation, admitted his involvement in the sale of the stolen items.

Pasay man shoots girlfriend's suitor

JEALOUSY on Monday night led a man to shoot and seriously wound another man who had been courting the suspect's girlfriend in Pasay City.

Police identified the victim as Elmer Maceda, a resident of 2555 M. De la Cruz St., Pasay City. Maceda sustained several gunshot wounds from a .9 mm pistol and was brought to the Pasay City General Hospital, where he is in serious condition.

Maceda's attacker, a certain Buboy Palacol, who is said to be a toughie in his neighborhood, escaped after the shooting, police said.

SPO1 Reynaldo Aguba, Pasay City police homicide investigator, said the shooting happened at 10:15 a.m. just a few meters away from Maceda's house. He said Buboy Palacol approached Maceda, who was on his way home, and without any word repeatedly shot him.

Aguba said Maceda's persistent courting of Buboy's girlfriend, who was identified only as Eweng, apparently triggered the shooting.

The policeman said Maceda had just visited Buboy's girlfriend when he was shot.

Police are still looking for Buboy Palacol. *Nelson F. Flores*

1-M signature campaign against ROTC . . .

(From page A21)

dents, Student Christian Movement of the Philippines, National Union of Students of the Philippines, College Editors Guild of the Philippines and several other student councils and publications.

Apolinario Alvarez, secretary general of Anakbayan and one of the convenors of Abolish!, said they would present the signatures they gathered to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at the opening of the 12th Congress on July 23.

Hundreds of students opposed to the ROTC program are expected to march to Congress on July 23 to demand the program abolition.

Alvarez said the walkout by cadets, which started two weeks ago, is part of their campaign to scrap the program.

Such walkouts, he said, would continue until the "meaningless training program is abolished."

"We are firm in our position to abolish the ROTC," Alvarez said. "We cannot agree with the military's so-called reform and selective implementation. These proposals are just desperate attempts to preserve the military institution in its present form."

In Davao, militant groups also staged protests against ROTC. The most recent was the walkout of about 400 cadets from the Ateneo de Davao University on Sunday.

Ariel Casilao, Anakbayan vice president for Southern Mindanao, said ROTC no longer serves its purpose and has a corrupting influence on training officers and members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Another group, the Youth Solidarity Davao (YS), said in a statement that ROTC has become a milking cow for military officials and trainers.

In a manifesto of unity, convenors of Abolish! described ROTC as "rotten to the core," "corrupt" and "fascist."

The deaths of University of Sto. Tomas student Mark Welson Chua and De La Salle student Seth Lopez are "proof that the program breeds a culture of violence and fascism," the convenors said.

Chua was killed allegedly for exposing anomalies at the UST ROTC office. Chua's exposé led to the relief of the UST ROTC commandant and his men.

Lopez died while undergoing ROTC training a few years ago.

Retired Capt. Dan Vizmanos—chair of the Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Para sa Amnestiya (Selda) and one of the supporters of Abolish!—urged the government to conduct a thorough study of the abolition of the course.

"There is no more need for this course," Vizmanos said. "In the first place, the reason why it was created under the 1935 National Defense Act was because of the external threat present before World War II."

But with the threats no longer there, Vizmanos said, it is time for the government to scrap the program.

But Delia Moradas, Department of Science and Technology director for Southern Mindanao, believed the ROTC should be turned into an elective course.

"If they (students) really want to be in the military, then they can take it," she said.

Moradas said the government should also propose a science and technology subject as an alternative to ROTC. ***With reports from Ayan C. Mellejor and Joel B. Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Assunta de Rossi three times a daring young lady

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

ASSUNTA de Rossi was initially hesitant to shed her clothes and do daring scenes in "Red Diaries." But the script, and the fact that the director is **Maryo J. de los Reyes,** convinced her to do what her three roles called for.

"Red Diaries" launches the 18-year-old Filipino-Italian to solo stardom. In the movie, three women, all played by Assunta, write about the highs and lows of their lives. Susanna is a two-timing mistress; Cara is a prodigal daughter who's a seminarian's sexual fantasy; and Lucila is the battered wife of a policeman.

Is she comfortable with sexy roles?

"I didn't take off my clothes in this movie for the sake of being called a sex goddess or screen siren," Assunta says. "The script calls for nude and sexy scenes. It's not easy doing those scenes. But I hope people will remember my effort in this movie and not just the sexy scenes."

Assunta's leading men in "Red Diaries" are **Carlos Morales, Anton Bernardo, Dante Gomez** and **Jam Melendez.**

Jaya's latest

WHY was **Jaya**'s new album, "Unleashed," stalled by more than a year before it was released by Viva Records?

Jaya herself explains that seven tracks in the album were produced by **Pat Castillo.** But after the songs were recorded, they had to stop since she and Pat got busy with other things.

But recently, Jaya finally released "Unleashed," complete with 12 tracks, including three revivals.

JAYA. An album and a concert for "Unleashed."

Although the recording game is nothing new to her—her self-titled debut album was multi-platinum—Jaya says she is excited about her latest album, her sixth from Viva Records.

"I have both Tagalog and English tunes in this new album, but the music has changed quite a bit from my earlier albums," she explains. "The instrumentation is fuller. If you will notice, the funky groove in some of the English songs are reminiscent of club music, the current rage in the world music scene."

Gerard Salonga worked on the arrangement for her version of **John Lennon**'s "Love."

"The fact that we had more time to choose more songs for the album made me more satisfied about the final product," Jaya offers. "The recording lull turned out to be an advantage for me and the people who worked behind the album."

Jaya holds a major concert, also titled "Unleashed," at the Araneta Coliseum on July 28.

Wishing they were Charlene

HERE'S a text message apparently from women who have been fantasizing about being **Charlene Gonzales.**

"I have news! I'm preggy. *Ang hirap pala, lalo na kasi malamang* twins. *Daming 'di mo magawa. Naninibago nga ako eh. Buti na lang* very supportive *si* Aga."

Dream on, girls.

Ovation for Gary V in Martin's show

BELIEVE it or not, but **Gary Valenciano** got a standing ovation in **Martin Nievera's** concert at Onstage in Greenbelt last Friday night.

We received a text message from Martin, who thanked us for our review of his concert series (Showbiz Tidbits, July 6, 2001).

Martin said we should have seen instead the July 6 show, which marked his 19th year in the business.

"You would have loved it. It was the celebration of my 19th year and it was star-studded. Gary V entered late. I had a deal with the crowd. I said as soon as he (Gary) walks in, everyone stand and scream.

"He arrived and walked into a standing ovation! He was so red. I escorted him to his seat and during the last two encores, I pulled him onstage and had him imitate me back. *Parang* duel.

"*Sana* you saw it. Then he ended the show with me, all the way to the closing of the curtain. *Galing talaga.* It was very touching *nga.* Wish you were there again. A night to remember *talaga.*"

Martin will have two more shows at Onstage on July 19 and 26.

DE ROSSI. Bares on the big screen but not to be called a sex goddess.

'SWORDFISH'

Over-the-top techno thriller

BY RUBEN M. CRUZ JR.

THE OPENING scene of "Swordfish" finds John Travolta in an L.A. coffee shop smoking a very expensive cigar as he pontificates on the deteriorating quality of American films. He proceeds to pay homage to Sydney Lumet's "Dog Day Afternoon," saying it is easily the acclaimed director's best work and inarguably Al Pacino's best film.

The only problem is, he says, "Dog Day" didn't push the outside of the envelope. The film was afraid to explore Sonny's (Pacino's character) homosexuality and it had a cop-out ending because the character dies in the end. Travolta argues that if Sonny started killing his hostages—even just one hostage—the cops would have listened. He could have walked away with the money and gotten his lover the sex transplant, for which he robbed that bank in the first place.

REVIEW

Of course, Travolta fails to mention that "Dog Day" was based on a true story. But after he finishes his brief monologue, I get his point about pushing the outside of the envelope.

What follows is probably the most riveting explosion scene in any contemporary film—a slow motion, 360-degree pan that sends a shock wave of flying bodies, cars and whatever else there was on the screen.

The fact that director Dominic Sena and writer Skip Woods thought nothing of giving the film's piece de resistance right away is perhaps a testament to their confidence in "Swordfish." It's as if they're saying, "You like that? Stick around, there's more." And they spend the next hour and a half trying to prove they're right by stringing together one action highlight after another, offering a virtual smorgasbord of adrenaline fixes.

Intricate subplots

This is the kind of over-the-top guy flick that made "Die Hard" so entertaining to watch. The film's narrative suffers from a credibility problem typical of its genre, but then again, it's precisely the out-of-this-world-ness that is its selling point.

I mean, no one really believes that John McClane could be a victim of terrorists thrice over—unless of course he lived in Basilan—but we were willing to be gullible for the sake of "Die Hard" II and III. "Swordfish" requires a similar investment.

The plot revolves around Gabriel Shear (Travolta), a patriotic super criminal working for a covert organization headed by a US senator (Sam Shepard in a very short role). Shear is planning an ambitious bank heist that would net him a secret government slush fund worth $9.5 billion -- money he intends to use to wage war against anti-American terrorists.

Although Travolta's opening spiel showed some of the promise of a Vincent Vega (his character in "Pulp Fiction"), Shear is actually more akin to the egocentric but charming villains he played in "Broken Arrow" and "Face Off."

Yes, Travolta is supposed to be the villain here but the intricate subplots manage to keep you second-guessing about the true nature of the characters in the film. This is definitely not a case of what you see is what you get.

In "Swordfish" almost everyone is not who he or she seems to be, and Shear's Machiavellian purpose makes him an enigma, something that Travolta acts out convincingly.

Likeable baddie

And the thing with Travolta is, the bad guy is not really such a bad guy when he's playing him. In "Broken Arrow," for instance, I wanted him to beat Christian Slater. Travolta's magnetic personality makes for a very persuasive and likeable bad guy. (As always, there are exceptions. I wanted everyone obliterated in the fiasco that was "Battlefield Earth," including Travolta.)

"Swordfish" takes on its techno thriller mantle early in the film. In order to pull off the robbery, Shear and company would not only need to break into a bank but also hack into its computer to get the money into their offshore accounts (is this familiar?).

Actually, the computer lingo sounds better. "Construct a worm program, pop the firewall, upload the Trojan horse and download the funds." I believe that's how Shear puts it.

He entrusts the task of signing up the world's best computer hacker to his girl Ginger, portrayed by Halle Berry with the pizzazz of a street prostitute plying her trade in front of Malate church. Berry is shown in a lot of skimpy outfits and even goes topless in one scene, but that is not how she is able to recruit Stan Jobson (Hugh Jackman).

Stan wants nothing to do with computers after spending two years in prison for destroying an online FBI Big Brother program. But Ginger dangles an irresistible bait—the chance to regain custody of his only child who is living with Stan's porn-star ex-wife and her porn-filmmaker lover.

Handsome hacker

Jackman is probably the best looking hacker we've ever seen, I kid you not. Those noisy girls behind me (you know who you are) just can't get enough of the Wolverine actor. Stan being a hacker, there are naturally several scenes showing him frenetically punching into computer keys, and one of the girls behind me blurted out, "He makes typing look so sexy!" Computer nerds beware. Typing can be a come-on.

Sena, who directed the Nicolas Cage-Angelina Jolie starrer "Gone in 60 Seconds," shows he is a master at lacing action films with MTV styling. There's not much logic behind the car chases, gunfights and explosions, but boy do they look pretty.

Woods' screenplay, which zigzags from one plot line to the next and jumps from one time frame to another, helps the director keep the pacing tight. And his snappy dialogue complements the film's panache.

"Swordfish" boasts of an excellent cast but that is also its bane, as it under-utilizes gifted actors like Shepard (who's also a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and a noted director), Berry (Golden Globe best actress) and Don Cheadle (last seen in "Traffic") who plays an FBI agent hot on the trail of Shear and Stanley.

This is yet again another cop role for Cheadle who still manages to give to a very familiar role something we haven't seen from him before. This guy is a Morgan Freeman in the making, if he's not one already. He needs some film leads and not just the straight-to-HBO variety.

Also in the film is soccer star-turned actor Vinnie Jones, used mostly as a decoration playing Shear's main goon. I know Jones can't do much aside from playing tough and being stoic, but you have to have seen him in the Guy Ritchie films "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels" and "Snatch" in order to appreciate how gifted a baddie he can be.

Overall, though, "Swordfish" delivers the promise of its trailer. It is quite fun to watch. And you only need a movie ticket to see it. No passwords required.

WHAT YOU see is not what you get from stars Halle Berry, Hugh Jackman ·

Tessie at 20

(From page A26)

another. That's why I'm trying to be careful about myself and my health, because I have friends who died young.

Did you suffer mid-life crisis?

I did. *At bumabalik-balik pa rin 'yan* up to now. *Isang libro 'yan. Mahaba yan.* Before *kasi,* the meaning of life wasn't clear to me. Now I know the real meaning of life is really balance. Balance of work, family and friends, and all the little things—looking at the sunset, smelling the flowers, seeing what a nice day it is, despite the pollution and the traffic.

Who are your role models?

Mother Theresa. Oprah (Winfrey). I also admire my mom and my mother-in-law. Mrs. EJ Pullin is now 87 years old and still well. But she doesn't want to travel anymore that's why she hasn't been to the Philippines.

She's always full of joy and is very healthy. And she's living alone in England. She writes us wonderful letters every week on how the seasons change and how she keeps busy gardening, riding a bus or going to the supermarket. If I can only reach 70 years old, *masaya na ko.*

What did you learn from *Ka* Roger as an Englishman?

His maturity. That I have to learn to trust our children, that they will do well even without us around.

And he always says that as a married couple, we have to do things together. He doesn't want "Okay, I'll just meet you in the restaurant or see you at the party." He wants us to go together. He can't leave ahead of me. He's really my guiding force and my pillar of strength. And since we're also friends, I can also tell him everything, from problems with work, to the maid or the driver.

He has very good insight even if I'm the one who's always confrontational, reactionary and emotional. He always tells me to relax.

What did he learn from you?

He says I have terrific work ethics and I work very hard. After "Teysi ng Tahanan," he didn't feel I slowed down. I did a lot of other things for our town in Catbalogan. I am the president of the Catbaloganon Foundation and we do projects. I go to my hometown twice a year.

After 20 years in the business, what have you learned?

I've learned that you're only as good as your last achievement, and that this career will not last forever, and that you will not find perfect happiness from fame and fortune. The wellspring of happiness comes from other sources, like old friends.

Who are your bestfriends?

Angie Lacson is working for a corporation. *Doctora* Cris Villanueva is a 70-year-old obstetrician-gynecologist, and Bobby Caballero used to work with me in advertising. We were copywriters.

You're a bigger star than your mom ever was. What does she say about that?

She's proud to be the mother of Tessie Tomas. But I never really dreamt I would go this far and I would become big. When I was in advertising, I just wanted to put up my own ad agency one day.

What can you say about the political scene now?

I'm part of the Artista sa Pagbabago movement. I'm very sad that Edsa III had to happen. I'm very disenchanted, worried and frustrated about the Abu Sayyaf attack. When will all of this end? I have my sympathy for GMA.

I hope that in this lifetime, I can make a difference in the lives of the people as an entertainer, without entering politics. I think my best service to the community would be not as a politician but as an active NGO participant. *Louie C. Camino, Leah Salterio*

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MARTINEZ

Irreverence is Leo's game

WHETHER throwing pot shots at politicians and other powers-that-be, cracking a naughty joke and dropping a punch line, irreverence is Leo Martinez's game.

As Congressman Manhik Manaog, Leo's unusual intonation has caught the fancy of radio announcers who mimic his Batangueño accent (he hails from Balayan, Batangas) on the air.

As Uncle Leo in the popular Ponkana commercial, he is doting, lovable and a friend to kids.

Leo can be anything and gets away with it. His secret is his ability to inject wit into an otherwise colorless line, as seen in his current shows, "Idol Ko Si Kap" (Saturdays, 7-8 p.m., GMA 7) and "Ispup" (Saturdays, 8-9 p.m., ABC-5).

On his own, Leo has novel ideas about making the country a better place to live in. The seasoned theater actor has come up with a book of monologues through the Actors Workshop, for men, women and in-between.

Leo sifted through scripts from the US and asked the Screenwriters' Guild of the Philippines to adapt them to local situations and ended up with 100 five-minute monologues on anything under the sun.

The idea is for this art form to gain more following by taking it out of theater and bringing it to laymen. A Makati restaurant and Malate bar have agreed to carry the book in their place. Leo is looking for more private firms to support his project.

"Instead of asking beauty contestants inane questions, why not ask them what they are proudest of in their place? Stress the positive so we can be proud of our country. Noontime show and talk show hosts can include a 'Maipagmalaki Ko' portion in their interviews," says Leo.

Channel 7, in fact, has expressed interest in the actor's brainchild. So how about giving this, and other "Leoisms" a try?

LOUIE'S CINEMA

LUCAS FILM THX [illegible]

NOW SHOWING

FINAL FANTASY:
The Spirits Within
(PG-13 RT - 1:46)
Fantasy-Action-Science Fiction-Adventure

Starring:
Ming-Na Wen
James Woods
Ving Rhames
Steve Buscemi
Donald Sutherland

July 11 - Wednesday
6:00 PM - Final Fantasy
8:20 PM - Final Fantasy
10:40 PM - Final Fantasy

UPCOMING MOVIES AT LOUIE'S THX:
JURASIC PARK III
Bridgit Jones Diary
Moulin Rouge

[illegible]

High-end concepts in film viewing

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

REMEMBER when you could go to the movies for only a few pesos? These days, you have to plunk down up to P120 for a single screening in one of those snooty movie palaces with plush carpets and seats, and sound systems so acute that they can virtually pick up the sound of one hand clapping.

But we aren't applauding the way that moviegoing has turned expensive and even prohibitive of late. Which is why we're boggled by the report that Hong Kong has come up with the most expensive movie admission prices in the world—would you believe HK$175 per seat in two ultra-special screening rooms?!

To make the whopping price a good deal, the two-of-a-kind screening rooms have only 16 seats each, and viewers get free popcorn and soft drinks from waiters who are at their beck and call. How posh can you get?

HK$175 is equivalent to US$22, which in turn is worth something like P1,100. Would you spend a thousand bucks to see a film, even in the plushest and most exclusive of theaters?

If enough people here say yes, then the high-end concept could have a future in the Philippines, as well. As for the original Hong Kong venues, they've been fully booked until the end of the month!

Truth to tell, however, the most exclusive movie theater we've patronized is a small theater (only 50 seats) in Paris, which has only one screening per day: at midnight.

The *tres* exclusive theater is an art house that caters to a very chic clientele of film buffs who specialize in the obscure gems of prewar French cinema.

Why only one screening? There aren't many fans of that kind of cinema around. Why at midnight? The owner has a day job. OK—but when does he get to sleep?!

New TV series

STARTING July 20 at 9 p.m. AXN TV will screen "Seven Days," a series about a CIA agent who has the unique ability of travelling through time to stop world catastrophes before they happen. It takes him seven days to undo those catastrophic events, hence the show's title.

The sci-fi thriller topbills **Jonathan Lapaglia** as **Frank Parker**, and **Don Franklin** and **Justina Vail** also play important roles.

But the real star in this production is the Sphere, a huge and complex device that uses alien technology. How does it work? Here goes:

"The Sphere generates a 'temporal displacement field' by altering an object's gravitational polymetry, so the object shifts in time. As the Sphere generates its temporal compensating wave, the pilot feels like he's being electrocuted and sees the events that have happened flash before him in reverse.

"Due to the instability of the timing device, landings are very uncertain. So, the pilot has to actually maneuver the Sphere and maintain points of alignment in three dimensions."—Well, if you *say* so!

"Seven Days" is telecast every Friday at 9 p.m.

TV treats

ON THE National Geographic Channel, "Tomorrow's World" features amazing new inventions and technological marvels every Thursday at 9:30 p.m. This month, some of the features are on online voting, solar-powered vehicles, baby brain scans, robotic monkeys, fish acupuncture, artificial hands and gas detectors.

Yes! mag joins corporate show at Glorietta Center

SUMMIT Publishing's Yes! Magazine offers another sizzling issue this July as it features an in-depth and extensive story and never-before-seen photos of the very controversial Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales wedding.

The wedding of the two stars is dubbed as the wedding of the year and Yes! Magazine offers a detailed account of the event, from the planning stage down to the actual wedding held in Baguio City.

Summit Publishing Inc. and Yes! Magazine joins Primetrade Asia Inc.'s The Corporate Show until today at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City.

The Corporate Show .01 aims to consolidate the advertising and marketing needs of corporations into one combined effort that enables corporations to establish a huge network of potential clients in a short period of time through the tested medium of the trade fair.

The event attracts a diverse and well-qualified market of customers from a variety of industries and backgrounds, all in one day and all in one place. It will support corporations in building strong relations with suppliers and potential clients through various activities in the three days that it will be held.

The Corporate Show .01 is presented by Philippine Daily Inquirer, Centrex Corporation and Philonline, with Club Panoly Resort Inc., Family First Inc., Canon Marketing (Philippines) Inc., and Asian Spirit.

Official radio stations are Citylite 88.3, Magic 89.9 WTM, Joey 92.3, 93.9 KCFM, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite and 105.1 Crossover.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ALONG CAME A SPIDER - P 13 11:30, 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20	ATLANTIS - GP 11:45, 1:45, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	DRIVEN - P 13 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50
FINAL FANTASY - GP 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50	DR. DOOLITTLE 2 - GP 11:40, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40	SWORD FISH - R 18 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

AYALA CINEMAS
ARTFILM - GLORIETTA 4 Art Film
OPENS JULY 18 (Wed.)
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

PHILIPPINE PREMIERE
From the Critically Acclaimed Director of "CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON"
RIDE WITH THE DEVIL
A Film by ANG LEE
IN A NO-MAN'S LAND BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, YOU DIDN'T FIGHT FOR THE BLUE OR THE GRAY... YOU FOUGHT FOR YOUR FRIENDS AND YOUR FAMILY.
SKEET ULRICH TOBEY MAGUIRE JEFFREY WRIGHT
Ang Lee ("The Ice Storm," "Sense and Sensibility" & Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon") once again takes audiences on a journey to a different time and place, and into his characters' internal conflicts. A cast of rising young stars portrays young Americans, striving to define themselves and the country they had always called home, amidst national turmoil. The screenplay for Ride with the Devil is adapted (by Lee's longtime collaborator, James Schamus) from Daniel Woodrell's novel Woe to Live On.

Eye-Popping Realism First Time Ever On Screen!
THE EPIC ADVENTURE BEGINS TODAY!
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

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THE SPIRITS WITHIN
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Walt Disney PICTURES PRESENTS
ATLANTIS
THE LOST EMPIRE

Distributed by BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL thru COLUMBIA PICTURES

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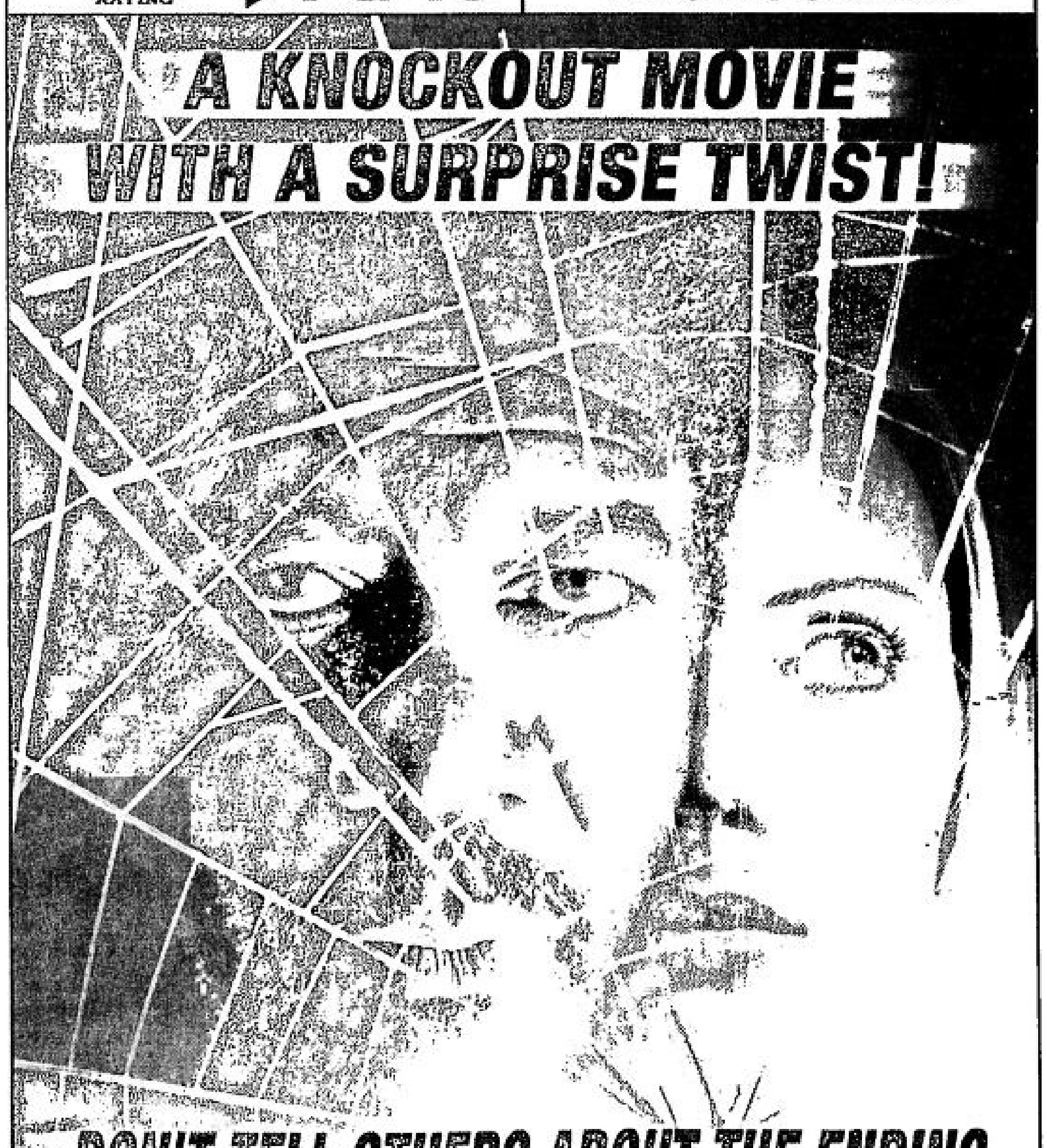

A KNOCKOUT MOVIE WITH A SURPRISE TWIST!

DON'T TELL OTHERS ABOUT THE ENDING
MORGAN FREEMAN MONICA POTTER
along came a spider
united international pictures
VIVA INTERNATIONAL PICTURES
now showing

SECOND WEEK! HYPER-ELECTRIFYING ACTION THAT'S HOTTER THAN BURSTING FLAMES !
MTRCB RATING ▶ R Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.

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88.3 89.9 MAGIC

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Entertainment Rates

Fee per message successfully sent:
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*(Ticket reservation is currently available at Glorietta 4.)

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Tessie T. after 20

Q & A

HAS it been 20 years already?

"I think I have lived a charmed life," Tessie Tomas says. "I know I have talent, but I'm also super lucky in a sense that I got all the right breaks at the right time. I didn't have to look for it."

That talent and the right breaks pulled Tessie out of relative "obscurity" as an advertising executive and thrust her into the limelight as a writer and stand-up comedian who creates characters from her imagination and observations and makes those characters unforgettable.

Some of them are no longer be in the limelight today, but they linger in the memory: Bonnie Buendia the bold star, Barbara Tengco the wife of the corrupt congressman, and most memorable of all, Meldita the imeldific lady who could cause audiences to bust their guts laughing and then also make them shed a tear or two.

Has it been 20 years since "Champoy?"

Ang sakit sa tenga, 'no? But I should be happy and grateful. I started "Champoy" in 1981. I was even telling myself, "*Totoo ba itong bilang ko?*"

So how would you describe the 20 years?

Glorious, wonderful, divine, very productive and profitable. This is such a fulfilling job.

What do you consider the highlight of those 20 years?

Definitely "Meldita." That was a turning point in my career and also the peak. Before her was Bonnie Buendia, which was a very difficult character.

After "Champoy," I had a very difficult one-woman show that launched me into the one-woman act which they were saying I pioneered. The project was "Miss Margarida's Way," the story of a deranged school teacher. I was giving a monologue for an hour and 45 minutes. One minute she is sane, the next minute she is lifting her skirt, teaching biology or touching her breast. At first, I didn't think I could do it. But director Tony Espejo challenged me to do it. *Sa* rehearsals *pa lang*, he was convincing me already to lift my skirt. He said we couldn't do the play unless I lifted my skirt.

Looking back, I kept on asking myself, "*Paano ko nakaya 'yon?*"

I also remember the struggle because that's when I had my nodules. I had to cut down on smoking until I was able to stop it completely. I would sleep early, no talking for two weeks, and then medication. My doctor said if my voice did not return after two weeks, I had to be operated on.

I was so terrorized because Sylvia La Torre told me, "*Huwag mong ipapagalaw ang* boses mo."

"Champoy," Bonnie Buendia, Meldita, all are in the league of stand-up comedy. Then I went back to TV via "Teysie ng Tahanan" and "Abangan ang Susunod na Kabanata." *Magkasabay 'yon and halos sabay din natapos* after more than six years. After that was "Onli in the Pilipins."

Another high point, I would say, is "Compañero y Compañera" because I was made to do current affairs. It was a different format with Atty. Rene Cayetano. I didn't know I could do it at first and yet I warmed up to the role. That was very fulfilling.

Now it's "Feel at Home" which is basically also my concept of a lifestyle-oriented show. And there's "Eto na ang Susunod na Kabanata" which revived the old sitcom.

Sa personal life *naman*, my getting married to Roger (Pullin). It's been seven and a half years. We were married in April 1994.

How is the marriage?

Very good. I don't really like to use "very" *dahil baka mausog*. But when you're happy, you tell the whole world about it. And when you have lived with dysfunction and a lot of misery in your life, you're afraid to be happy. This you have to correct, because a healthy marriage is a happy marriage. That's what I have.

Roger is a wonderful man. But I also have to pat myself in the back because I changed a lot from my previous marriage. *Sabi nga ng mga* psychologists, paradigm shift *daw ako*. My attitude changed a lot, and I have hardly any expectations because when you don't expect, God showers you with what you want. With Roger, I learned how to give and take.

Before *kasi*, I was so self-centered. I was always putting career ahead of anything else. *Masyado kong sinasamba ang* career *ko* to the point that everything else, including myself, came last. That's not good. Now, I know how to balance.

It's work and co-existing with work is personal happiness.

What if you get more work now?

I won't accept it anymore. I've learned how to say no. Actually, I turned down several offers. Before I make a decision, I would always consult him (Roger), so it becomes like a conjugal decision and we will not blame each other in the end.

More than anything, Roger and I are friends. That's important.

How many years passed before you gave yourself another chance at love?

Thirteen years of being a single parent. But I'm very happy because I'm finally, after a long time, friends with my ex. We can talk healthily about our son.

How's your son Robin?

He is now in New York, taking up fashion design at Parson's School. That's what he wants. He gave up his job as art director at Ace Saatchi.

Was it hard allowing Robin to study in the US?

Ang hirap, the language of letting go. He left last January but I'm much better now. It helps that Roger is there and I have become more mature. I can also say this is also the best for both Robin and me because we were both too dependent on each other.

This is the time he wants, so why hold him back? He's 24. He should learn to be more independent and fend for himself. I got married when I was 24.

When I was 10, I already knew how to commute. I would take the jeep to dzXL in Aduana (Intramuros) to join the soap opera contest. So why can't Robin do it on his own in New York?

Weren't you afraid to let Robin live alone in New York?

I've changed a lot also when it comes to those things. I also love New York. Again it's parental letting go. If you are not confident of letting go of your children when they're 18, something must be wrong with the quality of the parenting. You cannot be by their side all their life.

But if I can bring back the hands of time, I wish I could have given Robin more quality time. I should have thought that it's not just shopping, dining at fine restaurants or bringing him abroad. Because in all those times, I was always in a hurry trying to catch a meeting with a producer or run to an interview. The learning process for me was too long.

Robin followed in your footsteps in advertising. Why didn't he enter show biz?

Yes, he used to work as art director for Ace Saatchi. There were times he would say, "*Parang gusto kong mag-ASAP. Nakakatuwa naman. Parang ang dali ng pera diyan. Mas mahirap itong ginagawa ko.*" But I would tell him, "You should have started younger."

But I'm glad he did not enter show biz. You're always scared when your child goes into the same field as you did.

It's been 20 years but how come you don't seem to have changed physically?

I haven't had a facelift yet.

Will you go to that extent?

If I am still on camera beyond 60 and I already look horrible, I will do it.

What changes happened to you as a professional?

I'm a bit more relaxed now. You didn't see me at my worst before when I was a worrier and hyper.

But being a workaholic I guess has become part of my character. You'd know that Tessie Tomas is sick when she speaks very slowly.

Even when I have two days free in my weekly schedule, I still find other things to do. I have to correct myself. I read books on voluntary simplicity, I meditate and go to Chakra (an energy center at Loyola Heights), but somehow, it's still an effort for me to slow down.

How late do you stay up?

I never go to bed beyond 12. That's the secret of staying young. For me, *dapat* 10 p.m. *tulog na 'ko*, especially if I have to be up by 6 or 7 a.m. the next morning for a taping.

What is your most relaxed hour?

I'm a morning person. Usually at breakfast, I'm still relaxed. After that, *taka-taka-tak na 'ko*.

But even my friends are telling me that my attention span is so short. When I was doing "Teysi ng Tahanan," my writers were telling me *ang bilis-bilis ko raw*.

What is your number one priority?

Personal happiness. I don't think I've experienced enough. I've given a whole lot to my career.

What will it take to have personal happiness?

Spending more time with Roger or for myself, like malling, watching a movie, having a massage, facial or hot oil treatment.

Are you vain?

I suppose I am. I'm very particular about my looks and I try very hard to take care of myself. I know that if I abuse myself, like if I drink or smoke a lot and stay up late, it will show on my face.

In my diet, *nahihirapan ako* because my husband loves to eat out. We're practically eating out three or four times a week in fine restaurants. So I need to work out.

How much wine do you drink?

Three bottles *lang*. (Laughs) No, *mga* two glasses *lang*.

What's your biggest expense?

In the past, jewelry. Now it's home renovation. *Masyado kong* feel *ang* new show *ko*, "Feel at Home."

Do you have regrets?

Of course. But I do not cry anymore when I think about them.

What similarities do you see between you and Imelda Marcos?

We both love jewelry, shoes, partying, entertaining. We're both vain and glamorous.

We both speak Waray. The few times that I met her, she was always talking to me in Waray. I am from Catbalogan, Samar. That's where I was born.

What kind of parties do you hold?

Very intimate. Usually at home *lang*. Dinner for six with my closest friends. But my 50th birthday was really a big party. It was a special occasion so I put my mind into it.

What are you passions?

Reading and writing. I avoid going to Powerbooks or National Bookstore because I will never leave without buying books and magazines. When I go to New York, half of my suitcase is filled with books.

What was the last book you read?

I'm still reading "The Courage to be Rich." I'm dreaming of one day writing a book or books. I know it will happen.

Who's the biggest influence in your life?

My mom, Laura Hermosa. She was my first tutor in show biz. She introduced me to show biz when I was 9.

What is the most important lesson she taught you?

The value of hard-earned money. That's why I learned how to save. In show biz, when it rains, it pours, but you have to learn how to save.

What are you still working to achieve?

Spiritual wisdom and depth. I have such a big spiritual thirst, but that's deep inside me. Even if you see me smile on TV and I'm trying to be always on top of the world, part of me wants to find time for my spirituality. There are still pangs of hunger to go to Tibet or fly off to India.

I took up hypnosis before and I was very much into the occult and astral projection. My hunger now is because of my cruel past. I was regressed before and I was told I was a cruel prince and I was killed. After that I was a soldier who, killed and got killed. In both cases, I was a man. But take note, *hindi ako tomboy. Huwag ninyo kong intrigahin diyan.*

Have you been asked to run for public office?

Madalas, pero hindi ko talaga hilig. But I must admit that if I didn't marry Roger, I would have gone into it. He really doesn't like politics. Priority *ko ang asawa ko.* Anything that will jeopardize or harm the marriage, I will definitely avoid. I know my priorities.

You know what his top priority is?

Music. But there was a time when we were talking about something and I told him, "I'm getting so nervous with you. I'm all alone here." Then he looked at me and said, "You're all that I want. You're all that I need."

Then I told him, "What about me? You're not all that I need?" But I was just kidding him because he started to get mushy. But I really almost cried when he said that.

What's the age gap between you and Roger?

Seven years. I'm 50 and he's 57.

What are your best traits as a professional?

I work hard and I'm always on time.

The worst?

I'm temperamental and very demanding.

What do you still want to achieve as a professional?

More quality movies and choice stage work. I'd like to do classic plays. I did Nick Joaquin's "Pinoy Agonistes" at the CCP Little Theater. It gave me a different kind of high. It was such a welcome respite. I told myself, "God, *aktres pa rin ako.*"

Do you plan to revive "Meldita?"

I'm planning to put up a major stand-up comedy shows and "Meldita" will definitely be part of it.

I have a high standard when it comes to performing. I don't want to use recycled scripts. I always want to use new materials.

What's your biggest fear?

Dying at this age.

Why are you afraid of dying?

Life is good. I worry about Roger, although less of Robin. I have this fear of losing Roger because he's older than I am. If there's one big prayer that I have for both of us, it's for God to give us a long life so we can celebrate one anniversary after

TESSIE/ A23

TALENT WITH A DOUBLE T. The right breaks came at the right time for Tessie Tomas.

> 'I was regressed before and I was told I was a cruel prince and I was killed. After that I was a soldier who killed and got killed. In both cases, I was a man. But take note, *hindi ako tomboy. Huwag niyo kong intrigahin diyan*'

BUSINESS

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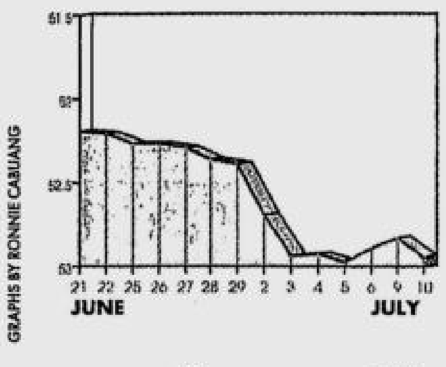


Peso-Dollar Rate

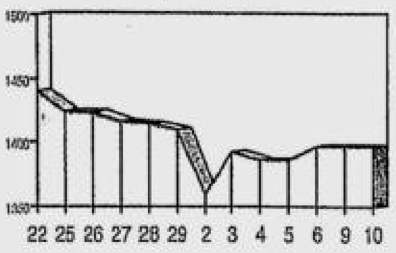
₱52.95 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
July 10, 2001

¥ 125.62 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 125.62 as of 5 p.m., July 10, 2001

GOLD:$267.10/267.60
per ounce Hong Kong,
July 10, 2001

STOCK MARKET

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares end down on profit-taking

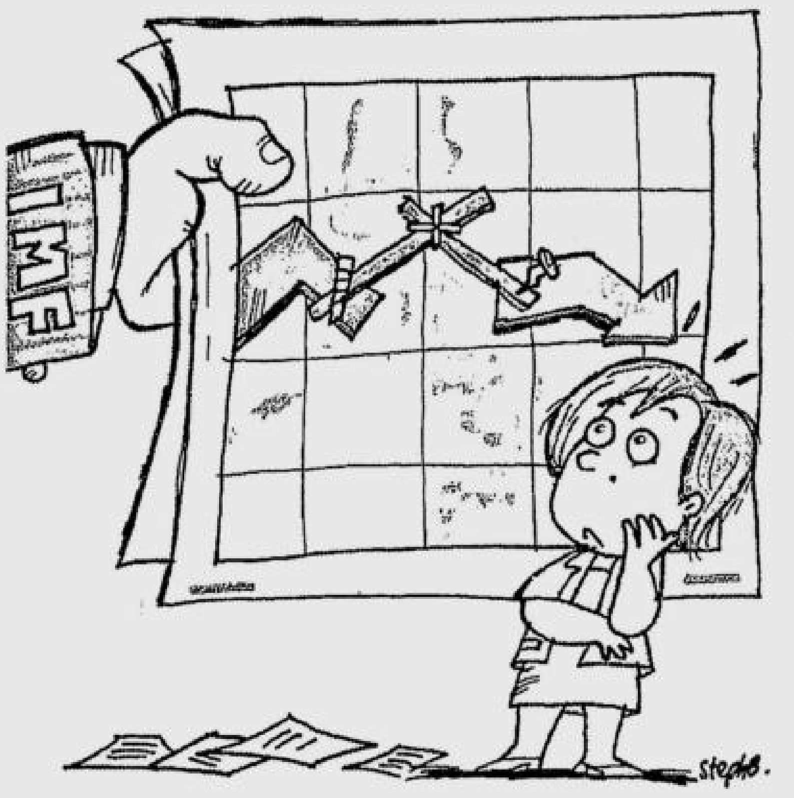
STOCKS ended slightly lower yesterday as investors chose to take profits on selected blue chips and lower liners in the absence of fresh positive leads, traders said.

The sell-off after Monday's slight gains reflected the continued short-term nature of investors who have been quick to sell into any uptick in the market.

A host of negatives including the law and order situation, slowing economy, rising inflation and the volatile peso continue to thwart upside movement. "There is a lack of conviction on the investors side for any sustained rise, at least in the short term," United Coconut Planters Bank Trust Fund portfolio manager Vanessa Lim said.

SHARES/ B4

IMF says growth outlook uncertain for RP economy



THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund said the Philippine economy faces an uncertain growth outlook amid weakening exports, strains in the banking system and a large budget deficit.

On the plus side, inflation has been contained and foreign reserves are intact, it said in a report issued Monday in Washington.

In a review of the country's economy—its first since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became president in January—the IMF forecast gross domestic product expanding 3 percent in 2001, with an improvement in domestic demand as the main driver. This is a downward revision of an earlier forecast of 3.3 percent.

The IMF acknowledged that Ms Macapagal has inherited a "challenging economic situation." She was swept to power on Jan. 20 following the ouster of Joseph Estrada, who faces corruption charges.

"The main downside risks stem from weakening global demand for electronics exports and the budget deficit, where higher-than-targeted domestic financing could put upward pressure on interest rates," the IMF said.

The government forecasts growth of at least 3.3 percent this year, but many private economists believe that is beyond its grasp. Growth in the first quarter slowed to 2.5 percent year-on-year from 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2000.

The IMF expects inflation to remain moderate, falling to around 5 percent by the end of the year, reflecting the stabilization of the peso and low capacity utilization.

Inflation in the six months to June averaged 6.7 percent. The government has set a full-year target of 6 percent to 7 percent.

Despite falling exports, the IMF expects the current account to remain in surplus due to weak import demand.

The IMF review is part of a non-loan monitoring program of the Philippine economy. As a seal of good housekeeping, investors are likely to watch whether the Philippines meets the economic and fiscal targets set in consultation with the IMF.

Although the banking sector is generally adequately capitalized, the IMF said, it has weakened somewhat, reflecting the turmoil in Manila's financial markets from the leadership crisis that erupted last October.

The IMF's concerns over the weakening fundamentals of the banking system are also shared by the leading credit rating agencies, which have cited this as a reason for keeping the Philippines' country outlook on negative.

The IMF said it "strongly" supports the government's economic strategy, centered on "fiscal discipline, good governance, market-oriented reform and poverty reduction."

The IMF said it backed the government's plans to focus on fiscal discipline, stamping out corruption, undertaking market-oriented reforms and reducing poverty.

IMF/ B2

OPEL

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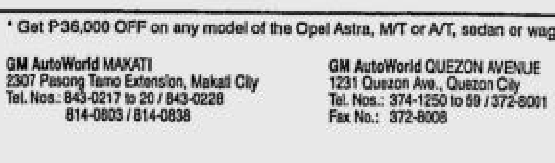

1.6 ASTRA SEDAN

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Rose Pack recovers prime Pasig properties

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PASIG Regional Trial Court has ordered Philippine Commercial International Bank to return prime properties in Pasig to Rose Packing Co. Inc., a shuttered company that used to operate the country's largest cannery.

In an order issued Friday, Pasig RTC Judge Alfredo Flores ordered PCIBank, which merged with Equitable Banking Corp. in 1999 to form Equitable PCI Bank Inc., to follow a Jan. 9, 1993, Supreme Court ruling that upheld, with finality, Rose Pack's claims over two pieces of property in Pasig.

Businessman Rene Knecht, whose family owned Rose Pack, claimed these properties were fraudulently attached by PCIBank, which was then controlled by the Lopez and Gokongwei families.

Rose Pack is battling to recover three properties. Apart from the properties in Pasig that it has been allowed to reclaim, it is also claiming ownership over a 31,000-square-meter property covering the entire town of Cainta in Rizal.

The court has ruled against returning the Cainta property to the company, saying it is no longer possible despite a 1993 Supreme Court decision allowing it.

Rose Pack, however, will now be able to seek a writ of possession covering the Pasig properties.

Knecht has already tapped auditing firm Pinkerton Asia Ltd. to assess the amount of damages it will claim against PCIBank as a result of the fraudulent attachment of these properties, which include the company's factory site.

He estimated that the claims would amount to billions of pesos considering the losses his company incurred when these properties were taken away forcibly by the bank.

Rose Pack was the country's second-largest food manufacturer next only to multinational firm Del Monte Philippines Inc. when its properties and production facilities were attached by PCIBank in the 1970s.

The Pasig court ordered the cancellation of the titles of the properties in the name of PCIBank in favor of Rose Pack.

It clarified, however, that new titles could not be issued under the name of Knecht Inc. because the company was not a party to the case.

Knecht Inc. is the holding company claiming the assets of Rose Pack, whose corporate life ceased in 1986.

The Rose Pack vs. PCI Bank case was among the graft and corruption charges that Knecht's late mother, Cristina Bradley, a US citizen, had requested the US Congress to investigate in 1997.

In her earlier letter to Texas Rep. Lamar Smith on Sept. 23, 1997, she explained what she believed was the motive behind PCIBank's acts against Rose Pack.

Bradley said her problems began when the late dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, first assumed office in 1966 and promptly laid the groundwork for the dictatorship that ensued when he declared Martial Law in 1972.

She said Marcos used his cohorts in PCIBank to grab the operations of Rosepack.

Despite gloom, gains seen from bonds

By Clarissa S. Batino

DESPITE bearish sentiments among creditors toward emerging markets, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas expressed confidence yesterday that the national government's $500-million global bond float would easily fetch $200 million in additional subscriptions.

"I am confident that there is a good chance that there would be an oversubscription," Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura told reporters.

The government will issue $500 million worth of 10-year global bonds in the coming weeks.

Buenaventura's optimism comes at a time when many analysts fear that emerging economies, including the Philippines, are showing their first signs of weakness since their major crises in 1997 and 1998, when they were rescued by billions of dollars in aid from the international financial community.

Just as the world economy is tailing off, Argentina, Brazil, Poland and Turkey are among the countries beginning to falter.

Other regions appear to be on the brink, including Asia, which "is once again experiencing serious difficulties," according to Morgan Stanley Dean Witter's weekly report.

Argentina's recurrent difficulties, including another denial of resignation rumors by Finance Minister Domingo Cavallo, put pressure on the currencies of southern Latin America on Friday.

Asia could be the next to be hit, according to international bank Morgan Stanley Dean Witter.

"The latest news coming out of Asia is simply very bad," according to the bank.

Exports from the region have collapsed by up to 23 percent in Taiwan, 16 percent in the Philippines and 13 percent in Singapore.

A banking source said US investment bank Credit Suisse First Boston, which the Philippine government tapped to handle its $500-million bond float, was worried it might suffer losses from the transaction.

Spreads on 10-year bonds has widened by as much as a percentage point following reports that Argentina may default on its loans.

Credit Suisse, according to a person familiar with the matter, may ask to renegotiate the pricing of the country's bonds, but Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho has said that as far as he is concerned, there will be no changes.

"A lot would really depend on whether or not Argentina defaults. If there would be a default, then I guess we are stuck with $500 million," Camacho said.

PDIC clears Urban Bank rehabilitation

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE BOARD of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. yesterday approved the recommendation of its management that Urban Bank Inc. be rehabilitated under the scheme proposed by Export and Industry Bank and the National Association of Urban Bank and Urbancorp Investments Inc. Depositors and Creditors, or Naud.

PDIC executive vice president Ricardo Tan said a signing of a memorandum of agreement between PDIC and the EIB-Naud group would be held in Malacañang this Friday.

The Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, was expected yesterday to approve the proposed rehabilitation of Urban Bank.

The management of PDIC last month determined that the proposed rehabilitation of Urban Bank was viable and the bank could be re-opened by August with safety to depositors, creditors and the general public.

EIB president Benjamin Castillo earlier said EIB would start servicing the first tranche of payments amounting to P500,000 for each depositor or creditor of the Urban group next month.

Castillo said EIB would then organize a program schedule for the payment of the balance owed to around 5,000 depositors and creditors over a three- to six-year period.

Under the approved rehabilitation plan, at least 10 percent of the deposits and placements of Urban Bank and its 40-percent owned investment house, Urbancorp, would be converted into equity.

EIB would then merge with Urban Bank and Urbancorp to create an entity with P3.8 billion in capital funds.

Urban Bank, a publicly listed company, would be the surviving entity, but the name of the bank would subsequently be changed to Export and Industry Bank.

As part of its commitment to help the bank, PDIC would extend P430 million in concessional financial assistance to EIB and would provide a P1.5-billion standby facility at market rates to EIB for any unanticipated withdrawals.

Around 5,000 depositors and creditors have funds trapped in Urban Bank and Urbancorp amounting to P12 billion.

This is on top of the over P3 billion combined funds of the two financial institutions' three largest depositors/investors, San Miguel Corp., Petron Corp. and Manila Electric Co.

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$200-M bond float on track, says Digitel

DIGITAL Telecommunications Philippines Inc. said yesterday its $200-million bond flotation was already in its documentation stage.

"Hopefully, the bond float will be done before the year ends," Digitel senior vice president for legal and intercarrier services William Pamintuan said in an interview.

He said Digitel was confident of the bond market's viability, but he stressed it was still difficult to make speculations as of now.

"The terms of the bonds are good, so I think we could sell them," he added.

Digitel has hired ING Barings to market the convertible bonds, which have a seven-year maturity period and a 10-percent interest rate.

The bond flotation is set to finance Digitel's entry into the wireless business by the first quarter of next year.

Digitel was supposed to start its cellular operations this month, but it was put off for April or May next year because it lacked funds.

"But we'll already have our soft launch in December and we'll be starting commercial operations by April or May next year," he said. *Abigail L. Ho*

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As of JUNE 22, 2001

ASSETS			
Cash and Cash Items	₱		116,344,176
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas			841,822,740
Due from Other Banks			1,157,725,019
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)			11,990,347,491
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)			485,414,169
Equity Investments (Net)			54,409,008
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (Net)			832,355,808
Other Assets (Net):			
a. Property Owned/Acquired			2,992,992,790
b. Others			1,967,869,606
TOTAL ASSETS	₱		20,439,280,807
LIABILITIES			
Demand Deposits	₱		878,517,859
Savings Deposits			7,027,658,115
Time Deposits			1,212,353,539
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas			8,489,591
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders			86,651,362
Bills Payable:			
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs			5,449,092,424
Others			2,606,935,826
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits			25,597,063
Other Liabilities			478,698,767
TOTAL LIABILITIES	₱		17,773,994,546
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS			
Capital Stock	₱		1,562,470,045
Surplus			659,096,361
Surplus Reserves			5,593,735
Appraisal Increment Reserve			438,126,120
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱		2,665,286,261
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱		20,439,280,807
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS			
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	₱		118,265,000
Bills for Collection - Domestic			974,149
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Mgt. Agreements			340,828,597
Invested in:			
Government Securities		₱ 29,136,931	
Other Securities, Debt Instrument and Shares of Stock		123,960,216	
Loans and Discounts		53,467,719	
Other Assets		134,263,731	
Accountabilities:			
Trust and Other Fiduciary		179,800,180	
Investment/Fund Management		50,000,000	
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities		111,028,417	
Securities Held as Collaterals			18,210
Other Contingent Accounts			16,565,010
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	₱		476,650,956
Other Information			
1. Deposits of:			
a.) Government	₱		48,559,641
b.) Banks			303,986,274
c.) Trust Department			14,459,247
2. COMPLIANCE WITH MAGNA CARTA LAW			
Prescribed Ratio of Compliance		6% For Small Ent.	2% For Medium Ent.
Actual Compliance		406.17%	1322.47%
Additional Information			
1. Non-performing loans and	₱		1,473,573,916
ratio to total loan portfolio			11.86%
2. Classified loans and other risk assets			1,348,680,670
3. General loan loss reserve			154,130,829
4. Specific loan loss reserve			222,828,877
5. Return on equity (ROE)			2.37%
6. DOSRI loans/advances and			531,962,626
ratio to total loan portfolio			4.30%
7. Past due DOSRI loans/advances and ratio to total loan portfolio			NONE

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We, Vicente G. Gamo and Maria Flordelis F. Aguenza of the above mentioned bank, do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

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Senior Vice President

(SGD) MARIA FLORDELIS F. AGUENZA
President

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Doc No 30
Page No 7
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NSC rehab will be fair–Roxas

TRADE Secretary Mar Roxas has assured local GI sheet manufacturers that there will be no unfair competition that will arise from the entry of new investors to cash-strapped National Steel Corp.

In a letter to members of the Filipino Galvanizers Institute, Roxas said consultations with industry players would be conducted in connection with the planned rehabilitation and operation of NSC.

FGI, consisting of nine GI sheet industry players, earlier raised the possibility of an uneven playing field with the entry of a new investor to NSC.

They even claimed lobbying and pressures were already being exerted on government agencies to provide for a tariff-free import duty for the new NSC investor.

The incentive was meant to make the debt-ridden NSC more palatable for new financiers.

In a recent letter to Roxas, FGI president Salvio Perez urged the trade department to resist "the pressures and lobbying of these parties" for the government to grant incentives and perks "as a precondition to the award of the right or contract to lease or operate the NSC facilities."

"Any measure of this kind will have a negative impact on the competitiveness stature of the local galvanizing industry, in particular, and Philippine downstream steel industries, in general."

FGI warned it would "vigorously" oppose any grant of tariff protection since this was precisely one of the reasons why NSC failed to raise its competitiveness in the wake of globalization.

"When tariff rates started to go down, the company was ill-equipped and ill-prepared to remain competitive as it could not wean away from the immense privileges it used to enjoy," it said.

While they agreed that NSC had to be rehabilitated, FGI suggested that the government choose an investor with proven technical and financial capabilities "and is in a position to infuse the capital needed to continuously operate the plant of this magnitude."

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IMF . . .

(From page B1)

But it cautioned: "Further steps will be needed to put the public finances on a sound footing."

Given high debt levels, the IMF said it was key that deficit targets for the whole year be met. The report also said "speedy action" was needed to strengthen the banking sector.

The lender suggested the country's central bank and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. be given additional authority to deal with problem banks quickly.

The IMF said the authorities' current monetary and exchange policy was appropriate and welcomed the central bank's intention to adopt inflation targeting. The Washington-based lender said that further interest rate cuts should be held back until the inflation outlook has improved.

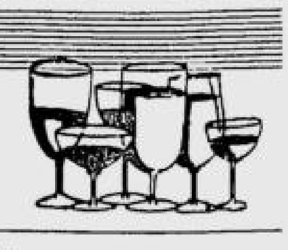
It said continued flexibility in the peso and avoiding a decline in reserves would also be key to reducing the vulnerability of the economy.

The IMF said the government had made solid progress on structural reforms, but said more should be done to further efforts on corruption and trade liberalization.

The government on Monday said it was sticking with its full year forecast for economic growth of 3.3 to 3.8 percent, with no plans for a review of that projection until the second quarter growth data is released in August. *AP, Reuters*

Manila subsidized hotel

COCKTALES



By Victor C. Agustin

THE MANILA Hotel may now have been privatized, but apparently it is still Juan de la Cruz's money that is keeping the historic hotel afloat.

Some P189 million in loans extended to the hotel in 1995 and 1996 by its original owners, GSIS, had already ballooned to about P400 million by end-2000 due to missed payments by its present owner, businessman Emilio Yap, according to GSIS documents.

When Yap finally acquired the Manila Hotel after a controversial bidding in 1995, the publisher-shipping magnate was supposed to have paid the Government Service Insurance System more than P636 million for 51-percent control of the historic hotel.

Yap actually lost in that bidding, but managed to disqualify the winning bid of Malaysia's Renong Berhad and ITT Sheraton through a controversial 1997 Supreme Court decision that declared the Manila Hotel as part of the national patrimony and that its sale to a foreign group would violate the "Filipino First Policy" enshrined in the Constitution.

The P189 million in drawdowns were actually a series of four medium-term loans, all with maturities of five years, and were extended by GSIS before Yap actually took management of the hotel.

All carried an identical 16-percent-a-year in interest and a two-year grace period, with the first two loans of P40 million and P60 million now having matured. The third one, a P75-million facility, is due end of this month, with the last one maturing in December.

According to the GSIS grapevine, the secretive and imperious Yap had resisted making payments on the loans.

"Despite repeated billings, TMHC (The Manila Hotel Corp.) has never formally responded to our letters nor made any arrangements to update its account," said a yearend executive summary prepared by the GSIS on the problem account.

Except for the first loan, no principal payments had been made on the last three loans since they were availed of in 1996.

Even repeated requests for such basic documents as the hotel's annual reports and audited financial statements from 1998 onwards had been denied to GSIS, despite the fact that the GSIS chair and president sit on the Manila Hotel board.

The GSIS representation in the Manila Hotel board had been reduced during the Estrada presidency to only two board members, allegedly because of Yap's increased capital call for the Manila Hotel that GSIS never subscribed to.

According to the same GSIS documents, Yap is counterclaiming P195 million plus interest allegedly due from GSIS as stockholder's equity to settle the Manila Hotel's loans. As may be concluded from the same documents, GSIS has never accepted Yap's claim.

Despite the magnitude of the GSIS losses, top officials of GSIS have refused to tangle with Yap because of his alleged "pervasive" influence over Malacañang, the Senate, and even the Court of Appeals/Supreme Court circles, according to a former GSIS official.

(One side story of this saga is the recent departure of former Sen. Ernesto Maceda from Yap's pro-government Manila Bulletin. Despite having staunchly lobbied for the Manila Hotel sale to Yap when he was still Senate President, Maceda had to transfer to another newspaper after he continued writing pro-Estrada pieces in the Bulletin even with Estrada's ouster from Malacañang.)

In addition to the Manila Hotel and the Bulletin, Yap also controls Philippine President Lines, Euro-med, and Philtrust, the thrift bank that used to be owned by the Catholic Church.

Heard through the grapevine

THE PHILIPPINE Village Hotel has run up to more than P25 million in unpaid lease to Nayong Pilipino.

Ditto with neighboring Kamayan Restaurant, which has difficulty paying its monthly rent and is now being threatened with the cancellation of its lease contract by Nayong Pilipino Executive Director Charito Planas.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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CLUB FILIPINO	-	300,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	400,000	450,000*/700,000 **
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	-	250,000/300,000*/450,000 **
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	395,000/445,000 *	400,000/450,000 *
METRO CLUB A/B*	160,000	175,000/180,000 *
MANILA POLO CLUB	-	3,600,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	-	800,000/850,000 *
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	600,000 **	250,000/425,000 *
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Taiwan denies cement dumping allegations

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

TAIWAN has denied that it was dumping its excess cement into the country, claiming that only a small portion of its cement exports were being shipped to the Philippines.

This was disclosed by Taipei Economic and Cultural Office director Patrick Tan who said that Taiwan cement was not being sold in the Philippines at prices lower than in Taiwan.

Tan said the Philippines has enough tools to protect its local cement industry against dumping such as the Safeguard Measures Act as long as they comply with the rules of the World Trade Organization.

Tan said the issue of dumping, which was first raised last year, would have been resolved much earlier had Taiwan been a member of the WTO like the Philippines. Taiwan is currently applying to join the WTO.

Taiwan Cement is currently the subject of a complaint by the Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp., which wants the government to slap an anti-dumping duty on cement imports. Philcemcor has accused Taiwan Cement of poaching in the local market by undercutting local players to drive them out of business and control the industry.

However, Taiwan Cement was reportedly shipping only 100,000 metric tons a month in the Philippines or less than 10 percent of total domestic demand, not enough to influence prices.

Napoleon Co, spokesperson for cement importers, said Philcemcor, which is dominated by the Big 4 cement makers (Cemex, Blue Circle, La Farge and Holderbank), has been using Taiwan Cement as an excuse to keep prices of cement high.

Co said local cement manufacturers were exporting their output at P38 per 40-kilo bag or more than three times the P130 per bag retail price in the local market. He noted that before Taiwan Cement started shipping to the Philippines, cement prices rose 115 percent even though demand was declining. He alleged that competition posed by Taiwan Cement was the main stumbling block for the establishment of a local cartel.

In reply to Philcemcor's claims of massive losses from the cement imports, Co said the local cement firms managed to generate P2.2 billion in operating income even though cement imports have increased to 12.56 percent of the market in 2000 from 3.84 percent in 1999. Co claimed that the industry would generate between P10 billion and P14 billion in operating profits this year.

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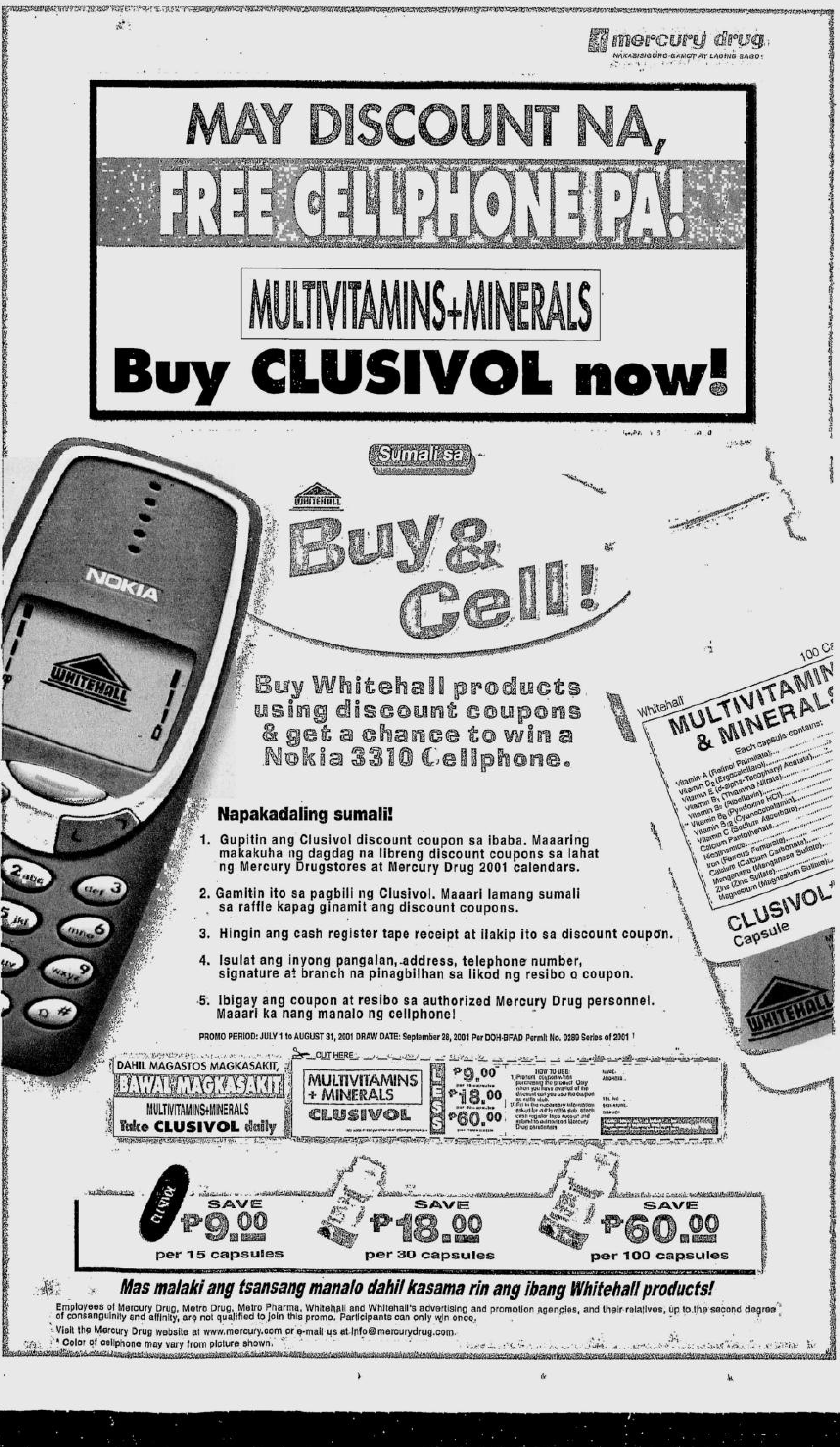
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ICTSI set to invest ₱416M to jumpstart Brazil project

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

PORT operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. is set to invest P416 million ($8 million) to jumpstart by November this year its operations in the newly privatized Port of Suape in Brazil over a 30-year concession period.

ICTSI's wholly owned subsidiary, Tecon Suape SA (TSSA), which was created to operate and develop the container terminal at the port, is expected to invest $60 million in equipment and facilities over the 30-year period, the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

Suape will be ICTSI's first new overseas project after the sale of its international subsidiaries under ICTSI International Holdings Corp. to a unit of Hong Kong-based Hutchison Whampoa last month.

TSSA will invest a total of $13 million in the first year of operations, the disclosure said. During the first year, TSSA is expected to incur a loss of $500,000.

Based on the bidding guidelines for the port, the minimum price was set at $50 million for a period of 30 years, and called for another $40 million to be invested in the new terminal.

The disclosure specified that TSSA was obligated to pay the Suape Port Authority an initial fee of $3.5 million, an annual fixed fee of approximately $1.55 million and variable fee of $25, $7.50 and $15 per full, empty and transshipped TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units).

"The container terminal has two 660-meter berths, a 23.5-meter concrete apron, and 27 hectares of yard area. Expansion is possible on 330 meters of existing quay line and 13 hectares of yard," the disclosure said.

Suape is a state company wholly owned by the State of Pernambuco. The concession was awarded to ICTSI on May 5 after a public bidding. Suape was established in 1978 as an industrial development zone covering 13,500 hectares and located 40 kilometers south of Recife, Pernambuco's state capital.

Suape's 51-foot deep waters allow large ships to berth on the South American east coast, a vital junction between the US to Europe routes.

The privatization of the Suape Port is the state government's latest attempt to trim down port costs and perk up internal competition. The state government has so far invested $200 million in the port.

Under the concession, the state remains the owner of the port, whose operations, however, are transferred to a private operator for a specified period of time. Among the advantages of the scheme is that it provides income to the government during the term of the concession and allows private capital investment in cranes and berths.

International Finance Corp., the investment arm of the World Bank, is providing financial assistance to carry out market, economic, financial and technical reforms and to assist in assessing the legal matters necessary to develop the privatization of the Suape port's container terminal under a long-term lease contract.

CURRENCIES

Jul-10-2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.177995	1.000000	52.8630
Japan	Yen	0.009396	0.007976	0.4216
United Kingdom	Pound	1.658970	1.408300	74.4470
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.151219	0.128370	6.7860
Switzerland	Franc	0.656119	0.556979	29.4436
Canada	Dollar	0.774793	0.657722	34.7692
Singapore	Dollar	0.644594	0.547196	28.9264
Australia	Dollar	0.600405	0.509684	26.9434
Bahrain	Dinar	3.124822	2.652661	140.2276
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.314132	0.266667	14.0968
Brunei	Dollar	0.643608	0.546359	28.8822
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000088	0.0047
Thailand	Baht	0.025936	0.022017	1.1639
UAE	Dirham	0.320805	0.272331	14.3962
Korea	Won	0.000911	0.000773	0.0409
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.848900	44.8754
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.434036	22.9444
France	Franc	0.152450	0.129414	6.8412
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.385214	20.3636
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.061692	3.2612
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.021044	1.1124
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000438	0.0232
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.142775	7.5475
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004234	0.2238
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005102	0.2697
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.021044	1.1124
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.077881	56.9800

DISCLOSURES

URBANCORP Realty Developers Inc. denied it had any information that could explain the increase in its share price that rose from P0.21 to P0.31 per share.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.** were Luis Co Chi Kiat, Eduardo Hernandez, Estelito Mendoza, Lucio Co, Robert Cokeng, Leonardo Dayao and Ponciano Mathay.

* * *

PILIPINO Telephone Corp. signed a subscription agreement with **Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.** with the latter subscribing to an additional 543,165 shares of Series J Class I preferred stock of Piltel at P1,000 per share.

* * *

BHI Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 20, 10 a.m. at the 18/F of Pearlbank Centre in Makati City. Only stockholders as of June 25 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SAN Miguel denied it was in discussions for the acquisition of **Southeast Asia Food Inc.** and **Silver Swan Manufacturing Co.** *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

Shares

(From page B1)

The main index closed down 7.73 points, or 0.55 percent, at 1,397.66 points. Turnover reached P447.42 million, up slightly from P346.199 million on Monday.

However, a significant chunk of the turnover was accounted for by a large cross transaction of 234,600 Globe Telecom shares worth P152.5 million.

"There was some light profit taking with people selling into recent strength," Eagle Equities president Joey Roxas said.

He added some further weakness in the peso might have also undermined sentiment.

Roxas said without any new leads to inspire, the main index was likely to consolidate around current levels for the next two days.

Lim said with the index ending below the psychological support level of 1,400 points and no positives on the horizon, it was likely to post further downside on Wednesday. *Reuters*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Tuesday, July 10, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.1	5.1	5	5	15,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	71	71.5	70.5	71	67,400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	35.5	36	35.5	35.5	53,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	206	208	205	206	30,300
Philippine National Bank	45	45	43.5	43.5	18,800
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	17,000
Filipino Fund Inc	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	170,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	255	260	250	255	4,400
Manulife Financial Corp.	1415	1415	1410	1415	2,960
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1230	1235	1225	1230	3,390
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	17,000
Diversified Fin. Network	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.54	0.55	1,960,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	650	675	650	670	235,590
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	200,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.53	0.55	0.53	0.53	510,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.3	3.8	3.3	3.8	178,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	705	705	695	695	115,040
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.037	0.037	0.035	0.036	33,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	38	38	38	38	8,200
Manila Electric Co. B	53	53	51	51.5	1,136,000
Petron Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.04	2.04	2,250,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	295,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.5	2.55	2.48	2.55	2,304,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	60,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	3,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	50,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	10,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	120,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	10,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5	5	4.8	4.85	1,726,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.75	14	13.75	14	232,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	115,000
RFM Corp.	2.14	2.14	2	2.06	6,248,000
San Miguel Corp. A	41.5	42	41.5	42	38,900
San Miguel Corp. B	48	48	47.5	47.5	354,900
Universal Robina Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	6,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.85	0.85	0.83	0.84	620,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.83	0.84	0.83	0.84	50,000
Ayala Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	930,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.46	1.54	1.46	1.48	2,906,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11	11.25	11	11	800
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.16	1.16	717,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.006	34,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.12	2.12	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12	12	12	12	600
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.205	0.205	430,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.9	1.94	1.84	1.84	5,375,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	850,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.165	0.14	0.14	11,550,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	900,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	120,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	31	31	30	30.5	398,500
Global Equities Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	200,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	290,000
Ionics Inc.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	3,000
Ipeople Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	2,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	220,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	40,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.46	0.46	2,400,000
Philtread Hdgs. Corp. B	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	190,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	190,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	700,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	30,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	40,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	900,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15.25	15.25	15.25	15.25	30,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.48	2,470,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.53	1,310,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	170,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	39.5	40	39.5	40	169,300
Cosmos Bottling Corp-Pref	6	6.5	6	6.5	22,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	2	2	1.9	2	26,000
Jollibee Warrants	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	5,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10	10	10	10	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	3,300
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.025	0.025	0.022	0.023	54,300,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	305,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	830,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,320,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,260,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.2	1.2	32,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.18	2.18	2.16	2.16	385,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	310,000
SM Development Corp.	0.79	0.8	0.79	0.8	130,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.4	1,706,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	60,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	10,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.038	0.038	0.035	0.035	31,600,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.185	0.185	370,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	30,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	16,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	32,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	18,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.36	0.41	0.36	0.41	1,560,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.39	0.43	0.39	0.42	5,660,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	13,400,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	12,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	80,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Pacifica	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	7,800,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	- 200,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	382,450	23,373,720.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	174,835,930	404,002,395.00
PRO	6,278,000	14,362,260.00
Mining	105,290,000	4,891,400.00
OIL	33,580,000	510,100.00
GRAND TOTALS:	320,366,380	447,139,875.00

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	568.35	DOWN 0.46
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,983.33	DOWN 12.19
PRO	527.45	DOWN 1.94
Mining	1,398.59	UP 68.89
OIL	1.56	DOWN 0.05
All Shares Index	791.27	UP 3.07
Composite	1,397.66	DOWN 7.73

NO. OF ADVANCES: 27; NO. OF DECLINES: 43; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 40; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 110; NO. OF TRADES: 2,191

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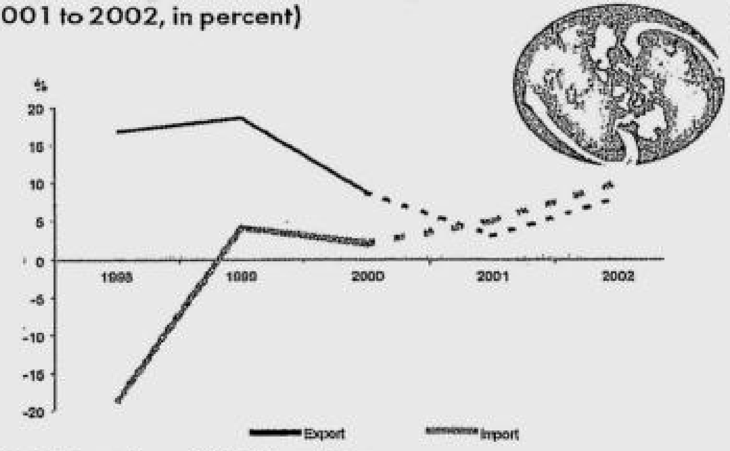
Projected growth of RP exports & imports*
(2001 to 2002, in percent)



*1998 to 2000= actual figures; 2001 to 2002= projections
Source: Asian Development Bank's, "Asian Development Outlook 2001"

PHILIPPINE trade figures showed declining imports last year attributed to "weak domestic demand." But the Asian Development Bank expected imports to pick up starting this year until 2002. Exports were expected to be adversely affected by a slowdown in the economy of the United States where almost 30-percent of Philippine exports go.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Vehicle sales down 14.8%

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

THE AUTOMOTIVE industry is bound for another setback this year as sales of passenger cars and commercial vehicles fell by 14.8 percent in the first six months this year.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. reported that sales reached only 35,379 units from January to June this year, lower than the 41,523 units sold in the same period last year.

The six-month sales performance dampened hopes of the industry for a recovery. Sales are unlikely to match last year's sales. Sales rose 12.8 percent to 83,949 units last year from 74,414 units in 1999.

A slump in production plus weak consumer sentiment due to the shaky political and security issues have kept buyers out of dealer showrooms in the first half this year.

Commercial vehicle sales slipped 7.3 percent to 24,329 units in the first half this year from 26,259 units a year ago. Due to resilient demand for Asian utility vehicles enabled commercial vehicles to corner 69 percent of total industry sales.

Passenger car sales crashed 27.6 percent to 11,050 units in the first six months this year from 15,264 units a year ago.

Toyota Motors Philippines Corp. maintained its lead in a shrinking market with a 24.5-percent market share with 8,652 units sold in the first six months. The best-selling Toyota Tamaraw FX and Revo models accounted for more than half of its sales.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. was second with a market share of 21.1 percent with 7,473 units sold in the first six months. Its AUV bet, the Adventure, sold 2,589 units in the first half and sales are expected to improve in the second half this year with the introduction of a new model.

Honda Cars Philippines Inc. was third with a 13.8-percent share of the market with 4,929 units sold. Isuzu Philippines Corp. was fourth with an 11.8-percent market share with 4,171 units sold. The Nissan group sold a combined 4,006 units in the first half for an 11.3-percent market share.

AUTOMOTIVE industry facing another reversal

Gov't studies options for Meralco stake

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE FINANCE department has asked the Investment Houses Association of the Philippines to submit another proposal for the disposition of the government's 10-percent stake in Manila Electric Co.

In an interview Friday, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said that IHAP's proposal to list warrants for the government's shares in the electric company could not be considered a divestment. Share warrants are rights to the shares of a certain company at a future date.

"I want to reflect it as a sale," Camacho said on the privatization move.

Under the IHAP proposal there will still be the risk that the government will not be able to dispose of its stake in Meralco assuming certain conditions, such as the price of the issue, were not met.

The finance secretary said that the sale of the Meralco stake and the rehabilitation of Philippine National Bank were two of the most important activities he intended to complete this year.

The government expects to raise P4 billion to P6 billion from the sale of its interest in the utility company which, it hopes, will help contain the country's budget deficit to P145 billion this year.

Earlier, Camacho said the government was considering either a secondary placement or a put and call option as a means of disposing the government's Meralco stake.

Several foreign investment banks have made separate proposals to the government on how to dispose of the government's Meralco stake through private placements.

Publicly listed Meralco, controlled by the Lopez family, is the country's biggest private distributor of electricity.

Equitable is SSS' depository bank

THE MONETARY Board has approved the appointment of Equitable PCI Bank as the Social Security System's depository bank. SSS, a financial giant with resources of P181.7 billion and 23 million members, requires extensive banking services.

SSS chair and president Vitaliano N. Nañagas II said: "We have chosen financial institution that has both the strong resources and the capability to service our various requirements."

Equitable PCI Bank president Deog:racias N. Vistan welcomed this development as a strong testimonial of the bank's quality service and reliability, and its strong relationship with the SSS. The SSS is a major shareholder of Equitable PCI Bank owning a 22-percent stake. Nañagas said the SSS would fully support the bank in attaining its goals.

By availing itself of Equitable PCI Bank's services, SSS will enjoy the convenience, speed and accessibility offered by the bank's wide array of products and services that include electronic banking.

Equitable PCI Bank has established leadership positions in various businesses including corporate banking, commercial banking, trust banking, remittances (Express Padala), leasing and finance (PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc.), investment banking (PCI Capital Corp.), and credit cards (Equitable CardNetwork). The country's third largest bank has likewise received numerous best bank awards from various international financial publications.

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Gov't warned of massive layoff in cement industry

THE LABOR force of the cement industry has warned of a massive layoff in its ranks as it asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to step in and stop cement imports from further destroying the local industry through unfair competition and price undercutting.

In their letter-appeal to the President and to Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas II, several labor union groups said that if cement imports would continue edging local cement out of the market, about 50,000 more workers and their families would likely lose their jobs and source of livelihood.

These labor groups include Alsons Cement Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative Inc., Davao Bacnotan Cement Workers Union, Apo Cemco-ALU and Solid Cement Labor Union.

So far, they said, more than 23,400 workers and their families have already been affected directly by the import surge from Taiwan, Japan and Indonesia, which forced the industry to cut by half its capacity. The share of imports in the total market rose steadily from 1.5 percent in 1998 to 24 percent as of June this year.

The unions also said that "consumers do not benefit from the import surge because retail prices of imported cement are only P2 to P5 lower than retail price of local cement. Only the importers and middlemen profit from the surge because while they bring in imported cement at P92 per bag, they sell it at P137, or at an exorbitant P45 profit margin."

That is why, the unions said at a hearing on July 5, only importers and traders masquerading as consumers or contractors opposed the cement industry's application for safeguard measures.

The workers said the "aggressive invasion of foreigners through the dumping of their excess cement" here was the downside of globalization and should be checked by increasing the tariff on cement by 50 percent.

The cement industry earlier said the provisional tariff should not result in higher retail prices because it would be imposed not on retail prices but on the landed cost of imports. The tariff, it added, would only eat into the "immoral margins," of the middlemen. The cement industry has also explained that even with a 50-percent tariff, imported cement will remain in the market since the cost of importation was not expected to rise substantially.

The workers trooped to the Department of Trade and Industry on July 5 to express their support for the tariff shield that the industry was seeking.

They were joined by hundreds of people from all walks of life—politicians from various affected municipalities, executives whose companies service the requirements of the cement industry and residents of areas that have prospered and are now suffering with the cement companies.

They added that these middlemen and foreign interests have virtually no stake in the country unlike the local companies that generate jobs and had invested in the past few years more than $2 billion to make the local industry one of the most modern in the world.

RFM sets up escrow fund to pay bonds

FOOD conglomerate RFM Corp. said on Monday it was setting up an escrow fund, which it would use to meet outstanding payments to its bondholders.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, RFM said it and its unit RFM Capital Ltd. have assured bondholders that all outstanding obligations would be met.

Under the escrow fund proposal, proceeds from the recent sale of its shares in Consumer Savings Bank, and semiconductor unit PSi Technology Holdings, as well as its tuna fish brand, would be allocated to the bondholders, RFM Corp. said.

It said the sale proceeds should total around $38 million with outstanding bond payment obligations amounting to $56 million.

RFM chief financial officer Meldin Al G. Roy said the company would be able to settle around 68 percent of its current obligations as a result of the sale income.

He added that the remaining $18 million "should be a very manageable amount that will be mainly sourced from operating cash flows."

He said the repayment plan for the remaining $18 million was being worked out with the bondholders and they expect to successfully conclude very soon a mutually beneficial arrangement and timetable.

Last Friday, the company deferred a quarterly payment of cash dividends for its preferred shares while re-negotiating with bondholders that it failed to pay in May.

In May, it defaulted on the redemption payment of RFM Capital's convertible bonds, citing a temporary cash flow mismatch.

RFM Corp. was down 2 centavos at P2.08 yesterday. *Reuters*

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M. East seen as big tuna mart

DAVAO CITY—The Department of Trade and Industry is eyeing the Middle East as a potential P1-billion market for domestic tuna products.

DTI director for Southern Mindanao Merly Cruz said the trade department was actively pushing for the adoption of an executive order to institutionalize the "roving halal inspectors" in the country.

"Our products are not yet accepted in the international Muslim community," she said.

She said all the products that the country exports to Islamic countries were being sent back with the note to have them inspected by an Imam or Muslim leaders.

"The EO will set up requirements for companies so when their products are finished, they are already in accordance with the halal," she said.

Cruz said the trade department would ensure that the criteria would be in line with the requirements of the international community. ***Joel B. Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

GOINGS-ON

Workshop for SMEs

IN CONNECTION with the forthcoming celebration of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Week on July 16 to 20 at the Philippine Trade Training Center, the SMED Council will hold a series of seminar-workshops designed to further strengthen the capability and competitiveness of small and medium enterprises in the country.

Trade Secretary Mar Roxas said the seminars and workshops would equip our SMEs with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to create more jobs, generate greater incomes and export earnings, and prepare them to compete.

This year's SMED Week theme is "Economic Progress through Small and Medium Enterprises," with simultaneous celebrations at the regional level to be spearheaded by provincial SME development councils.

Forum on technologies

A FORUM that will promote the various government programs on enterprise development in support of the government's anti-poverty program is slated on July 18-20, 2001 at the Philippine Trade Training Center along Roxas Blvd. in Pasay City.

At the Manila Forum on Technologies and Financing for Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Projects of Cooperatives, Micro, Cottage, SMEs and Starting Businessmen, resource persons from different government agencies will orient participants with the investment opportunities, technologies, training programs, and financial schemes available to them in their quest to start or expand livelihood projects in their communities.

There will also be a mini bank fair and an exhibit of products and services where developmental agencies, financing institutions and companies with new technologies will conduct one-on-one business clinics at their booths.

Money remittance service accord

THE INTERNATIONAL Exchange Bank (iBank) and Permit Inc. recently entered into a Money Remittance Service Agreement for fast and safe money delivery to designated beneficiaries in the Philippines.

iRemit Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of iVantage Corp.primarily engaged in servicing the money remittance needs of Filipino Overseas Contract Workers (FOCWs) to their loved ones in the Philippines.

iBank branches will serve as remittance payment centers to beneficiaries of iRemit nationwide. The remittance payments will be via iRemit checks encashable at any iBank's branch, real-time credit to account and pick-up of remittance proceeds from any iBank branch within 1 hour from time of remittance abroad.

Alchemy summit

A UNIQUE opportunity awaits business people from private corporations, government institutions and prospective entrepreneurs as marketing partners on July 19.

Information Management Research Co., the world's leader in integrating unstructured data, will be presenting the latest business solutions using information technology in a one-day summit at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel.

To be presented will be lending edge technologies in Remote Document Capture, Business Process Management, API Integration and New Alchemy Premium as well as new features in Alchemy release 7, Scan2, Data Grabber, Alchemy Webserver 7 and Alchemy XMI.

These technologies will be offered in the Philippines at very competitive costs to enable local companies to reduce their business costs, increase productivity and effectively compete in today's global marketplace.

BSP says peso forecast of foreign banks ‘farfetched’

By Clarissa S. Batino

AS THE peso fell six centavos to 52.95 to $1 yesterday, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has assured the public that doomsday projections of some foreign banks that the peso would hit a low of 55 to 60 in the coming months was farfetched.

“I don’t see any of these happening. I think it is more likely to improve than deteriorate,” BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

He said he believed the peso would recover closer to 50 by year’s end.

At least two foreign banks have laid out their bets against the peso on the table. An economist of Standard Charted Bank had said the local currency would depreciate to 55 to $1 in the next three months.

Investment bank Barclays Capital had said the peso could dip to 60 to a greenback in the next six to 12 months because the country was not earning enough dollars from exports and investments to pay off imports and debts.

The peso hit a record intra-day low of 55.75 to $1 and a closing low of 54.79 to $1 during the last few days of the Estrada administration. Barclays’ forecast meant the local currency would chart a new historic low.

Buenaventura said the public must be cautioned against believing these prophets of doom. He said Barclays was still insisting on its computation of the country’s short-term debts that were almost double than BSP’s version.

“If the public wants to believe Barclays that the peso would hit 60, then they should buy our CRPPs (currency risk protection program) forwards because we could sell dollars to them at 54.50,” the central bank chief said.

The currency forward, Buenaventura said, was a facility that could accommodate those who were bearish on the peso. However, no oil company or large importer has bought dollars through the BSP facility.

A trader from a foreign bank said the peso fell because of mild supply problems still caused by lingering uncertainties on the peace-and-order situation.

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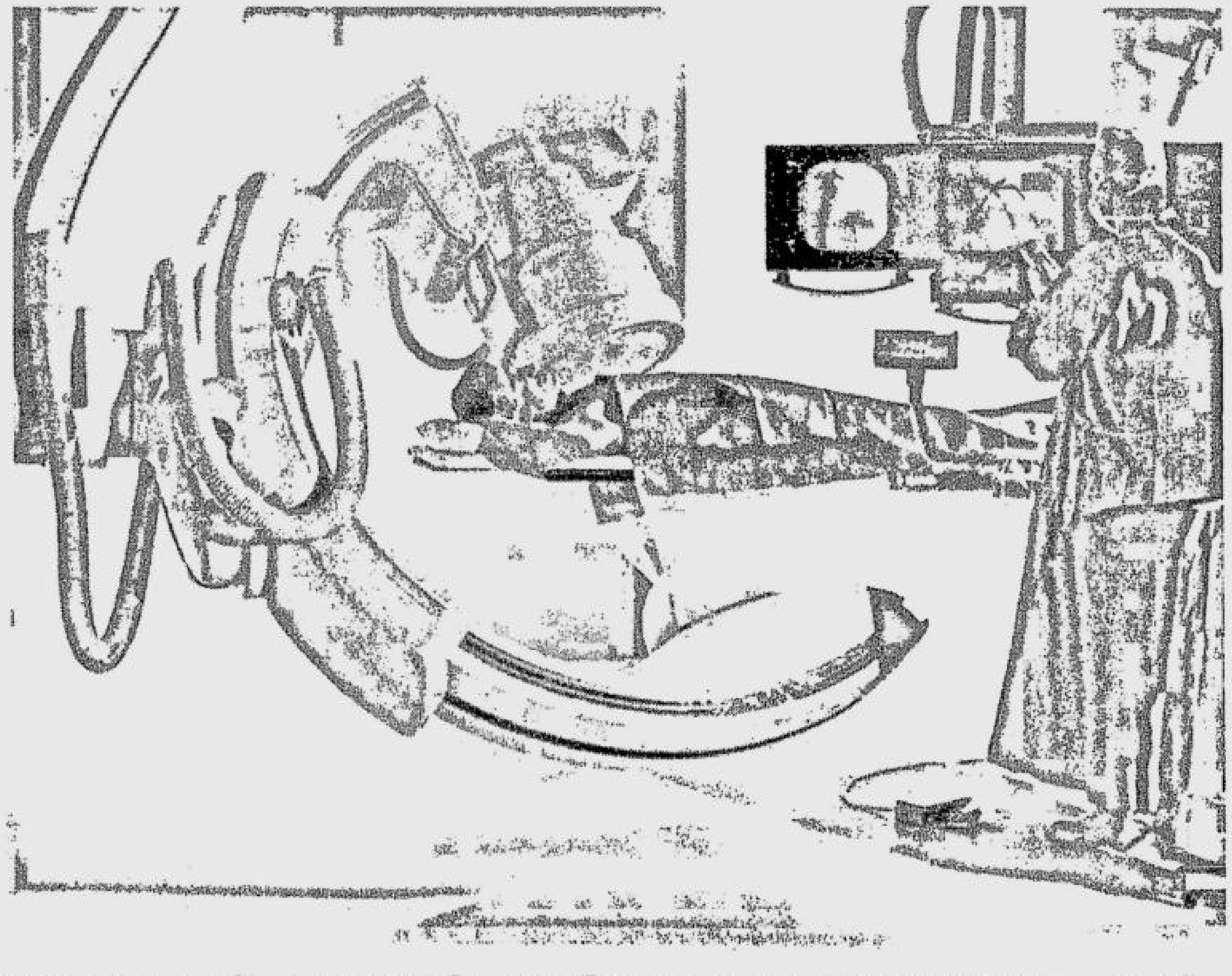

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late WILFRIDO S. SALVADOR was extrajudicially settled by the Heirs as per Doc. #371 Page#75 Book#3 series of 2001 by Not. Pub. Lic. Rhoderick De La Paz PDI-July 4, 11 & 18, 2001

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Philip T. Duyongco has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs on March 16, 2001 under Doc.#81; Page#17; Book#266; Series of 2001 bef. Not. Public Atty. Lucila Lawas-Yutok of Pasig City (PDI-July 4, 11 & 18, 2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that the S2 Lic. No. 14793N98 under the name of Dra. Desiree F. Manlapaz was lost

PERSONAL

ANGKONG SABINO,
HAPPY 71ST BIRTHDAY!
LOVE,
ABBY, EPHRAIM, HEZEKIAH
EZRA MEI, ARREN & ARENE

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH
Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God. I place in you all my interest and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers. Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath. St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls - Pray for me.
This prayer was found in the fiftieth year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In 1505 it was sent from the Pope to Emperor Charles when he was going into battle. Whoever shall read this prayer or hear it or keep it about themselves, shall never die a sudden death, or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on them; neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle.
Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire. It has never been known to fail so be sure you really want what you ask.

THANK YOU MAMA MARY
THANK YOU HOLY SPIRIT
THANK YOU PAPA JESUS

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Department of Health
JOSE R. REYES MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER
Manila

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFFS

The Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center invites sealed bid for the delivery of foodstuffs for the period SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2001.

Bid documents shall be released from July 12-18, 2001 at the Dietary Department, ground floor, JRRMMC upon payment of non-refundable fee of P100.00.

Pre-bid conference will be held on July 19, 2001 at the Dietary Department, ground floor, JRRMMC. 10:00 AM.

Sealed bids shall be submitted at the Dietary Department, ground floor, JRRMMC, not later than 10:00 a.m., July 24, 2001, after which time the same shall be publicly opened.

JRRMMC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY BID, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY OR DEFECT AND ACCEPT ANY BID WHICH IS MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **MA. ALICIA M. LIM, M.D.**
Medical Center Chief II

(PDI -- July 10 & 11, 2001)

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MOVIMONDO- Italy is implementing a project funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) entitled: *"Relief and Humanitarian Operations in Support of the Returnees, Displaced by the Insurgency in the Province of Lanao del Norte, Mindanao, Philippines:"*

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- Agricultural Inputs
- Agricultural Implements

TENDER DOCUMENTS

The tender dossier is available for collection at following mail address:

MOVIMONDO, P.O. Box # 13117
GSIS Post Office, Carmen 9000 Cagayan de Oro City
Tel/Fax:+63-63-341-5753; Cell 00917-7416322/9500173; E-mail movifil@iligan.webling.com

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

August 10,2001 at 12,00 am. Any tender received after this deadline will not be considered.

TENDER OPENING SESSION

On August 13,2001 at 10,00 am at Movimondo Field Office, Poblacion, Bacolod, Lanao del Norte- 9205 Philippines
Tel/Fax:+63-63-341-5753; Cell 00917-7416322/9500173; E-mail movifil@iligan.webling.com
From July 9, 2001

For purpose of securing a copy of the bidding requirements, please write us at the address: MOVIMONDO Field Office, Poblacion, Bacolod, Lanao del Norte- 9205 Philippines. Email: movifil@iligan.webling.com.

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Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO BID

RENOVATION WORKS

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM is inviting General Contractors for the renovation of the existing buildings on the SSS property in Las Piñas (formerly Vac-Phil Property).

The scope of work covers civil, architectural, electrical, mechanical, sanitary, landscaping and other miscellaneous works to complete the project. Prospective bidders should have valid license and classification issued by the Philippine Contractor Accreditation Board (PCAB) including registration and classification of contractors for government infrastructure.

1. PCAB License - Category "AA" General Building
2. PCAB Registration - Large "A" for Building

List of pre-qualification requirements must be obtained from the PBAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Building, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City with telephone numbers 922-2991 and 920-6401 local 2379/2380, upon presentation of letter of intent and/or original and valid license, size/range and kind of project issued by PCAB. The deadline of submission of pre-qualification documents is on 18 July 2001, at the same address.

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the System. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the System guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **HORACIO T. TEMPLO**
Executive Vice-President
& Chairman, Pre-qualification,
Bidding & Award Committee

(PDI -- July 11, 2001)

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Taguig BCO
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Laguna Contact Address:
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RISE E-NOVALICHES
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Telefax No. (033) 337 9252, Cellphone No 0917-514-1309

Applicants for Business Center & Sub-Center Operations (BCO/SCO) in other cities/areas may visit/contact RISE GROUP OF COMPANIES at Suite 1906, 19/F, Galleria Corporate Center, Ortigas Complex, Pasig City, Tel. No. 687-4311; CP No. 0919-592-4258, 0919-212-3230; E-mail: *risephilippines@hotmail.com*

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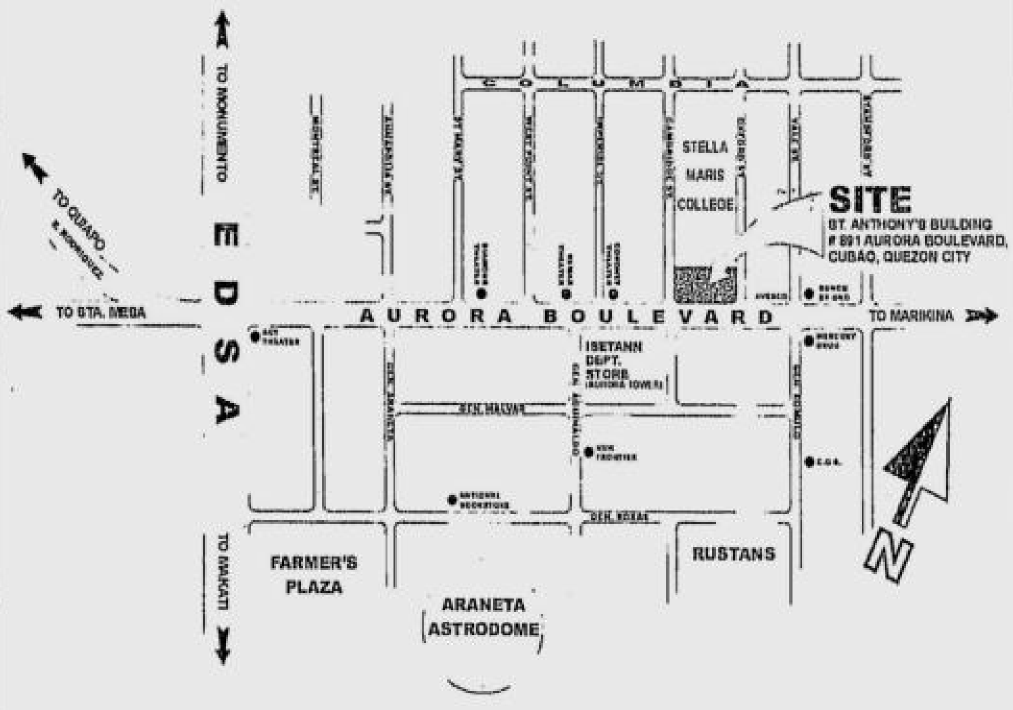

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INQUIRER
TRiViA
By **BONG BARRAMEDA**

On the button

Q. Why do men button from the right, women from the left?

A. Custom. Men usually dressed themselves, and because most men are right-handed, buttoning from the right made sense. Also, long before the pistol or revolver were invented, the weapon carried by men was the sword or saber, the scabbard hanging from the belt on the left side. In order that the coats or jackets they wore could easily be unbuttoned by the left hand and allow the right hand to unsheathe the sword freely and easily, their apparel should be buttoned on the right. On the other hand, women who could afford the expensive buttons of the day were more often dressed by maids, and maids found it easier to work from their right, the wearer's left. Tailors complied, and the convention stuck.

For the Record. Buttons did not originate as clothes fasteners. They were decorative, jewelry-like disks sewn on men's and women's clothing. The earliest types date from about 2000 B.C. and were unearthed at archeological digs in the Indus Valley in Southern Asia. It was only in the 13th century that the modern, functional button was invented in Europe.

Take a Tip. Got a grease stain on your dress? Rub chalk on the grease spot, let it absorb the oil, then brush off. If the stain lingers, rub chalk into it again before laundering.

WORD WATCH

Tisa : from the Spanish *tiza*, 'chalk.'

PDI -- July 11, 2001

National Power Corporation
Generation Company 1
161 Bonifacio Drive Port Area, Manila 1018

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

(PQ0301RCC-002)

The GENCO-1 Regional Contracts Committee (RCC) is inviting contractors to prequalify and to bid for the **SUPPLY OF ONE (1) SERVICE ENGINEER FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND PERFORMANCE TEST OF TWO INDUCED DRAFT FANS (IDF's), TWO FORCED DRAFT FANS (FDF's) AND TWO PRIMARY AIR FANS (PAF's) OF BATANGAS COAL-FIRED THERMAL POWER PLANT UNIT NO. 1.**

Application for prequalification is open to all local firms who have completed at least five service contracts of major fans of Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plants with a capacity of not less than 300MW.

Prequalification Forms shall be available for issuance starting **July 4 to 17, 2001** at the Contracts Management Office (CMO), 3rd Floor, NPC GENCO-1 Building, 161 Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila. Applicants shall be issued Prequalification Form upon presentation of original copy of the applicant's DTI and/or SEC Certificate, together with the Letter of Intent and payment of a non-refundable fee of **Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00)** per copy

For purposes of prequalification and bidding activities, the following schedule will be observed:

• Submission of Prequalification Documents	- July 20, 2001	- 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
• Issuance of Bid Documents	- August 01, 2001	- 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
• Pre-bid Conference	- August 03, 2001	- 10:00 AM
• Submission and Opening of Bids	- August 14, 2001	- 10:00 AM

The NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason; waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the Corporation. The NPC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparations of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **LORNA T. DY**
Department Manager, Professional Services
And Chairman, RCC

(PDI - July 4, 7 & 11, 2001)

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"Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit."
Luke 23:46

LUIS B. POLO, JR.

of San Jose, Camarines Sur and Naga City

Peacefully joined our Lord on 09 July 2001 at the age of 85.

His bereaved wife **Tomasita**; children **Floranie** and **Monico Jacob**, **Lily Ann**, **Luis III** and **Emily Fuentebella**, **Wynne Rose** and **Alfonso de Guzman**; grandchildren **Angel**, **Mikel** and **Rhea**, **Raffa**, **Laila**, **Isis**, **Luigi**, **Franco** and **Iñaki**; great grandchildren **Arielle** and **Kayla Louise**; sisters, brother, in-laws, nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Santuario de San Jose Parish Hall, Greenhills East, Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be on Saturday, July 14, 2001 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Santuario de San Jose.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
John 14:6

MANUEL R. CASAL (Sculptor)

June 10, 1925 - July 9, 2001

His loving wife **Aurita**; children **Lito**, **Ronnie**, **Joey**, **Jamin**, **Ricky**, **Bambi**, **Nancy** and **Menchie**; brother **Carlos**; sisters **Gloria**, **Ester** and **Baby**, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Christ The King Church in Green Meadows, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Friday, July 13, 2001 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Mandaluyong Cemetery, Mandaluyong City.

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(aka VICENTE CO)

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on July 6, 2001 at the age of 78.

We join his bereaved family, wife **SIU TIOK**; children **Joseph & Tina**, **Marcos & Helen**, **Tony**, **Benny & Marian**, **Jimmy & Lota**, **Johnny & Sandra**, **Victor & Carol**, and **Vicky**; grandchildren, brothers, sisters, in-laws, relatives, friends, and pious readers in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Felicidad Chapel, Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 15, 2001 at the Manila Memorial Park, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

"From darkness let the light shine!"
Genesis 1:3

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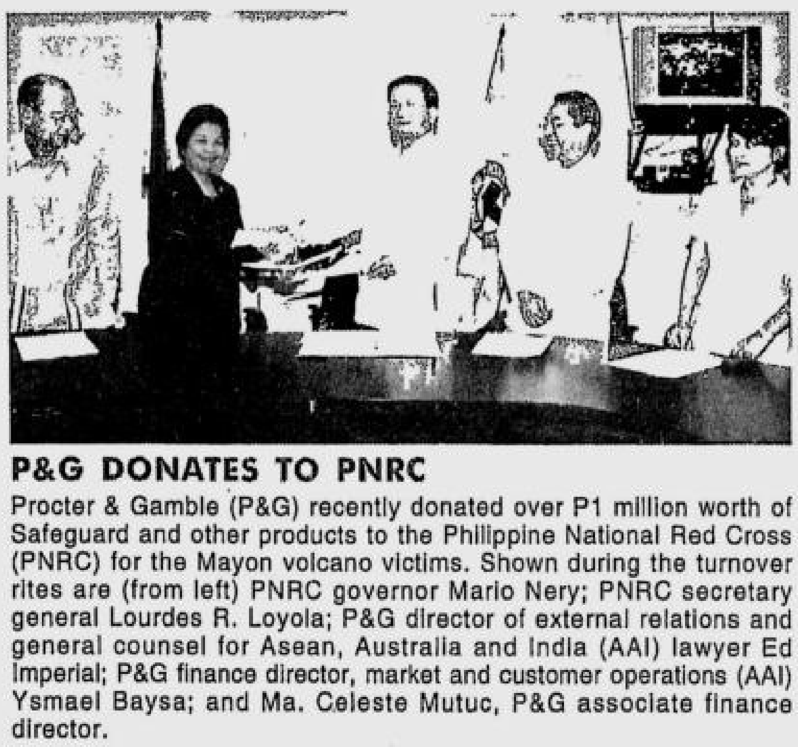
People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA,
Assistant Editor

UNIQUE OLD MANILA AMBIENCE BY THE BAY

Filipino regional cuisine and fresh seafood are the specialty at Pantalan Restaurant located at the Luneta Park, overlooking Manila Bay. Built like an old Manila mansion with half-painted stone walls, Pantalan has a boardwalk, the open-air section with a view of Manila Bay that most diners prefer, specially in the breezy evenings. The restaurant has an air-conditioned dining area and accepts functions for special occasions as well.



P&G DONATES TO PNRC

Procter & Gamble (P&G) recently donated over P1 million worth of Safeguard and other products to the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) for the Mayon volcano victims. Shown during the turnover rites are (from left) PNRC governor Mario Nery; PNRC secretary general Lourdes R. Loyola; P&G director of external relations and general counsel for Asean, Australia and India (AAI) lawyer Ed Imperial; P&G finance director, market and customer operations (AAI) Ysmael Baysa; and Ma. Celeste Mutuc, P&G associate finance director.

BITS Clips

J&J midwives award

THE NATIONWIDE search for the country's exceptional midwives is now on with the launching of the 8th Johnson & Johnson Outstanding Midwives Award of the Philippines. Organized by the Integrated Midwives Association of the Philippines (Imap) Inc. and supported by the Johnson & Johnson affiliate companies, the award program was launched recently at the DOH with Dr. Manuel M. Dayrit as guest of honor. Nomination forms midwives award are available at the Imap Metro Manila headquarters, regional and local chapters, as well as from Perceptions Inc. at the third floor of Fortune Office Building, 160 Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City. Completed forms should be submitted to Imap local chapter by July 15 or to the Imap national headquarters by July 31. Ten winners will be awarded during the Imap National Convention to be held in Batac, Ilocos Norte in October. For more information, call Imap at (02) 724-4849 or Robert Po of Perceptions at (02) 891-3556/3485/3396.

Customer contact World 2001

THE CUSTOMER Contact World Conference and trade exhibit to be held July 11 to 13 at the Shangri-La Makati Hotel in Makati City promises to demonstrate how business leaders and entrepreneurs alike stand to gain increased profitability and better customer loyalty through the use of integrated information and channels. Organized by the Australian media solutions firm Terrapinn, Customer Contact World is the Philippines' only customer relationship management and call center event that promises attendees from all sectors of business the opportunity to learn the newest techniques in customer management. All Asia Customer Services Inc. (ACS) is the event's official call center. Interested conference attendees and exhibitors may call Creative Answers Consultancy at 256-8354 or 0919-3419824 for registration details.

Paco new CDI Sakata Inx president

PACO

THE CDI Sakata Inx Corp. board of directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Bernardino C. Paco as its company president. Paco has had extensive experience expanding nearly four decades in CDI Sakata. Prior to this new appointment, he was the executive vice president and chief operating officer. Having joined CDI Sakata as printing ink technologist, Paco rose from the ranks to assume various positions in plant operations, marketing and general management. He is credited with having steered the export sales of various printing inks, metal coatings and glass enamel to the People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and other Asian countries. He has been the president of various industry organizations.

3-Day Sale Storm at Sta. Lucia

STA. LUCIA East Grand Mall again holds the three-day Sale Storm on July 13 to 15. A rain of discounts will come pouring in at the mall's specialty and boutiques, SLE Department Store, Home Gallery, Supermarket, SLE Essentials and Planet Toys. Dive into piles of fashionable items, homewares and gifts galore as discount drizzles of up to 50 percent on selected items mall-wide happen. Shop with no limits, as you buy more, the more chances you have of winning any of the five Ericsson cellphones at stake.

JONES, LANG LASALLE EXEC AT SIRCRO MEET

Monique Pronove, associate director of international realty firm Jones, Lang LaSalle, discussed "The Asian Markets: Concerns, Prospects and Unique Solutions" during the recent meeting of The Society of Realtors (Sircro) at the 25th floor of Ayala Tower One. She is shown receiving a gift of appreciation from president Arnold Canaria (Filinvest Industrial), flanked by Eric Soriano (ERA Phil.) and Andrew Birch (Arthur Andersen-Australia). Sircro, founded in 1980, is a limited membership guild of top realty professionals in the field of commercial, industrial and residential developments.

XENICAL SYMPOSIUM

Roche Phils. Inc. recently held a symposium "Lose weight. Gain life. The Xenical Difference." The event capped the weight loss drug's second year in the country. Xenical is the first and only non-systemically acting weight management agent that has continually proven to promote significant weight loss and maintenance, and to improve associated health risks. Since its introduction, Xenical has more than 8.5 million patient treatments worldwide. The symposium, which presented new data on Xenical and testimonials from Xenical users, was held at the Manila Hotel. Shown were (from right) guest speakers Dr. Arthur Campfield, president of the North American Association for the study of overweight and obesity; Dr. Rosa Allyn Sy, Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight and Obesity vice president; Dr. May Donato Tan, cardiologist; and Dr. Elizabeth Paz Pacheco, endocrinologist.

How to negotiate with your boss

By Ernie O. Cecilia

HAVE you ever tried negotiating with your boss regarding your performance appraisal, salary increase, promotion, or other career matters? Did you sense that the playing field was not exactly level? Did you wish you had a better preparation before you negotiated with your boss?

Negotiating skill is one of the most important competencies of the global Pinoy in the new economy. The career-oriented person will always need this unique and essential skill as he negotiates through his career life. Truly, one of the most difficult negotiating situations is when you face your boss.

Here is Negotiation 101 for the yuppies and umppies of the new workplace:

1. Choose your own battleground. Engage only in wars worth fighting for and those you can win. Choose the issues worth negotiating for. Give your boss little victories by obeying him and having his way. But on issues where your career is at stake, never waver—negotiate with your boss.

2. Believe in your cause and stand for it. Make sure you believe in your cause before you face your boss. If you are halfhearted about it, forget it. Once you take issue at anything worth negotiating for, go for it all the way.

3. Set reasonably high negotiation goals. Superficial goals lead to superficial results. The funny thing about goals is that when you put your heart into them, you usually achieve them. Make negotiation worth your while by setting high but reasonably achievable goals. After negotiating, don't have the "I-should-have-asked-for-more" feeling.

4. Start with agreements; never rush into confrontations. When you face your boss at the negotiating table, start with agreements. Do not rush into issues that will make the boss confrontational and adversarial. Have more common ground before discussing differences.

5. Get your facts right; don't rely on hearsay. Information is power—have it and use it. If you don't have your facts right, you could be blown into smithereens when the boss presents his facts-based arguments. Do a thorough research, get documents, ask the people who know, investigate and never rely on hearsay.

6. Focus on opportunities, not on problems. When discussing issues, focus more on solutions and opportunities. If you agree that there is a problem, quickly shift discussion to possible solutions and opportunities. Present studied and well thought of solutions. Don't pretend to have all the solutions. Never offer solutions where there are no problems.

7. In a negotiation, asking the right questions is very important. Ask the wrong questions and you'll get the wrong answers. Wrong questions lead to wrong answers. I've seen people ask silly questions for which they were not ready with a retort from the other side. Moreover, bosses don't savor being interrogated, so be careful when asking questions.

8. Quick decisions are not always the best decisions. You don't have to give your decision right away, if you are not sure. Sue for time and study your position and that of your boss. When you resume discussion, you are better prepared with your decision. When you are pressured to decide right there and then, chances are you can't make the best decisions.

9. If you lose your nerve, you'll lose the game. In negotiating, composure is very important. When you lose it, you'll lose focus and your chance to achieve your negotiating goal. Moreover, it is never wise to lose your temper or your nerve when the boss is on the other side of the table.

10. Don't compromise—adapt. When you have differences, the path to least resistance is to compromise. Instead of compromising, stop a while and think of alternatives closer to your goals. Adapt to what the boss suggests and repackage it. A compromise might not sound too much of a win-win situation.

11. The boss' perception is reality. You are not remembered by what you did but by what your boss thinks you did. Be quick to correct wrong impressions or perceptions of your boss. Nothing beats presenting facts and figures on your performance. Third party commendations and other documents help create the right perception. Be perceptive about how you are perceived by your boss.

12. Never depend on luck. Bad luck is an excuse for failure. Preparation, hard work, tenacity, and positive attitude will make you win. The funny thing is that when you have all these, you tend to be lucky, too.

13. Press for victory, but be ready for stalemate. You negotiate for a purpose. Press for achievement of that purpose, but don't be too stubborn. Be prepared for a stalemate. It is not defeat but a postponement of victory, if you know how to deal your cards right.

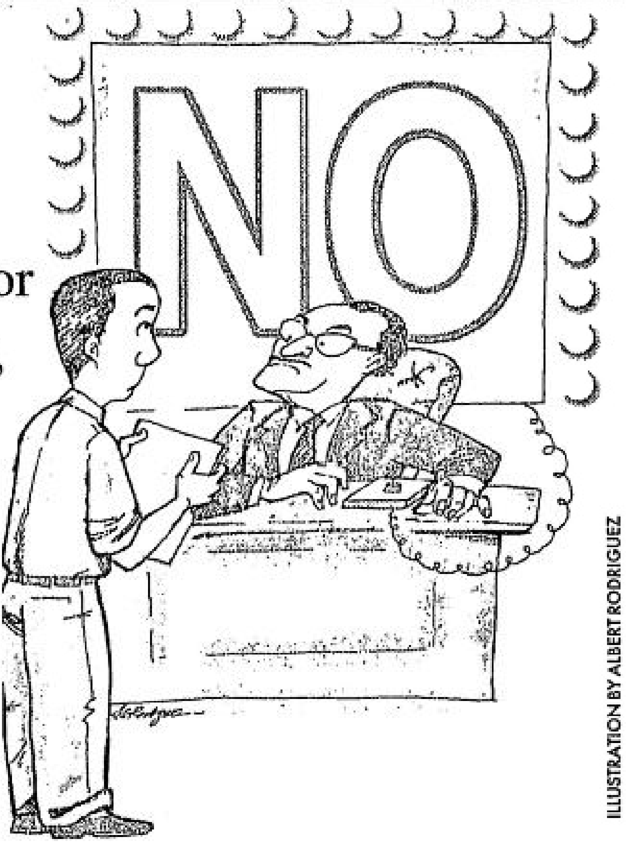
14. You are responsible for your own future. No one, much less your boss, can do for you what you neglect to do for yourself. You can't blame anybody else for your state of affairs. Use others, including your boss, to get to where you want to be. In the end, you are responsible for yourself.

15. Don't make an enemy out of your boss. Courtesy, warmth and honesty can captivate even the most oppressive foe. Never antagonize your boss. If you are right, you don't have to. If you are wrong, you can't afford to. After the negotiation, you will have to work with each other. Here's a friendly advice—take care of your boss now, the next could be worse.

If you want to survive, or even succeed, in the new workplace, learn to negotiate your way through the corporate ladder. Your boss could be your best instrument in moving up the ladder. He could also be your worst stumbling block. The bad news is that he is your boss. The good news is that you can negotiate with your boss if you know how. In fact, you should learn to manage your boss as well.

(The author is president and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center. His books "How to Get a Job," "How to Keep Your Job" and "99 Common Blunders in Negotiation" are available at National Bookstore, Powerbooks and Bookmark. E-mail comments and reactions to erniec@edsamail.com.ph. *Watch out for the People at Work Live! Seminars on "Negotiating Skills" to be conducted by Ernie Cecilia in August. Call Rochelle at 8978808 loc. 554 for details.)*

Press for victory, but be ready for stalemate



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PEOPLE at WORK

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ REGINA GALANG REYES, Subsection Editor

'I got fired through e-mail'

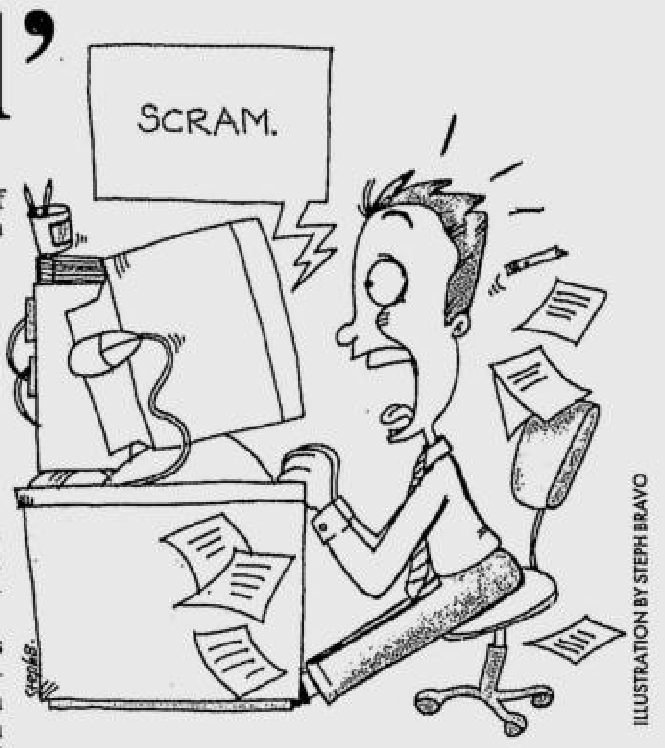


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

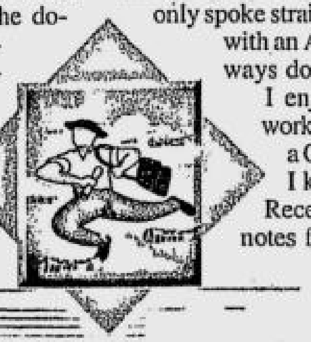
BY RESTY S. ODON

IT WAS a baptism of fire like no other—getting fired the first time in your first job. Talk about real world as the toughest university.

I had applied for a writing job in a Makati-based firm and I was one of the few who made it. The exams were tough, the toughest I've ever taken in my entire life, but I enjoyed them immensely for the test items were stuff I was sort of born into: spelling, grammar and vocabulary, geography, reading comprehension, memory assessment and writing.

Batches and batches of hopefuls, from fresh grads to fortysomethings, took the battery of tests, but most of them went home crestfallen. As for me, I knew I was gonna make it because I was a despicable nerd who treated information trivia like they were God's word. Luckily, I also passed the interview in spite of myself.

And so one day, I found myself listening to our lady boss together with two Ateneo grads, a University of Hawaii English major of Filipino descent (what was she doing here, with our unemployment rate?) and an intimidating professional writer from a local magazine. They all spoke straight English and the last person knew how to speak Japanese, having recently studied in Japan. Coming from UP Baguio with a plebeian background, I felt like the proverbial square peg in a round hole.



POSTCARDS FROM THE CORPORATE EDGE

But who cared? I needed this job so much. I was tired of living like a parasite and this was my chance to move up the food chain. And so I enjoyed it as much as I could, notwithstanding all the attendant faux pas. I felt like I was living in the States. (The department would later come to be known as the English Channel, owing to the preponderance of people working there who only spoke straight English, what with an American CEO always doing the rounds.)

I enjoyed a LAN-ed work environment with a Gothic motif. Cool, I knew I was home. Receiving memos and notes from our boss via the computer excited me no end. We used software that was so user-friendly.

We trainees were promised six months of training and a litany of benefits that would make my mother happy. The word "training" for me was a period of learning and so I wasn't afraid to make mistakes. However, "training" to them meant an extension of the exams. It was inevitable, therefore, for me to receive one morning in my computer a mail titled "Regret." It started off with "I regret to inform you that..." It hit me like a stun gun. It was at least hours before I got back to my senses.

After only a month of training, I got fired via the computer, via the local area network I was boasting to my cousins at home about. The impersonality of the electronic slap hurt the most. All around me that day, there was only silence but in my mind, I could hear a megaphone announcing my dispensability, telling me to get out and get out quick.

I walked out of the danged place with almost nary a goodbye to my batch mates. Soon, I felt cold with the mere mention of high tech for I blamed it for relegating me once again to parasitic status.

That was about seven years ago but still, things haven't changed much. Through the years, I would witness around me the popularity of "casualized" labor, union busting, and other sophisticated strategies to tell lowly employees how dispensable they are while deftly exploring the loopholes of the law to come up with a pathetically contrived way of running a business.

If this is what they call real world, I should have stayed a student forever where the university is the universe.

Where is man's humanity in the modern workplace? Did we shape our tools in order for these to shape us thereafter, like one philosopher said?

My former boss fired me in my first job could have told me the plain truth early on. More importantly, she should have delivered her message of termination personally. Maybe, she thought the impersonality of a computer would lessen the sting, but she was dead wrong. Instead, she gave me my first taste of the Real World: A might whack on my newly grad butt.

(E-mail contributions to Postcards to rreyes@inquirer.com.ph.*)*

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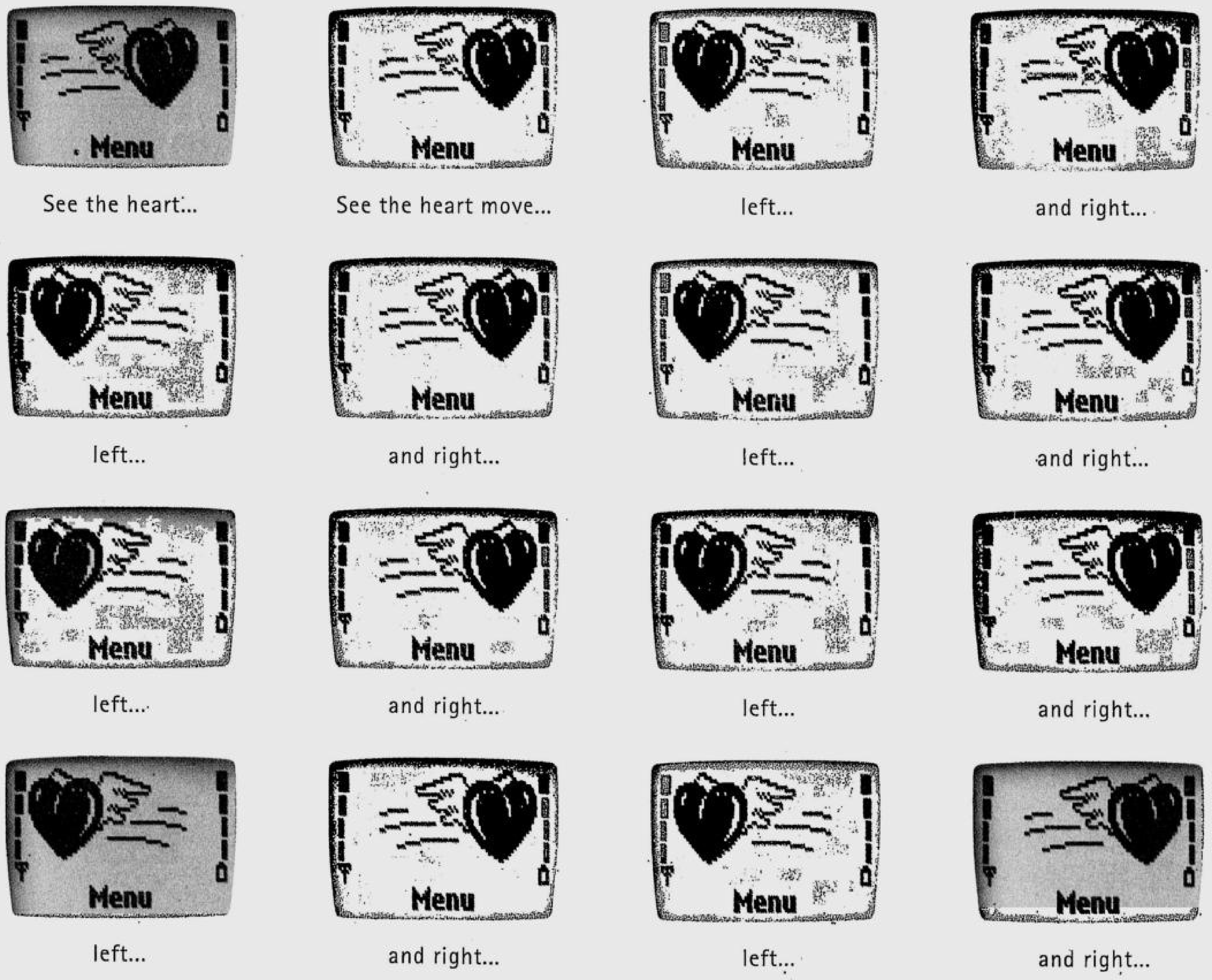
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Shoot that ball

2bU! fastbreaks to this year's UAAP basketball season and scores with features on the teams, the heartthrobs, the coaches and even the fans

Conversation with top UAAP players

By JULES ALCANTARA
PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

IT was a tall order (excuse the pun) to gather all of them at one table and keep them seated. Recently, 2bU! had dinner with some of the top UAAP players in the country. It was a blessing then that National Sports Grill was huge and spacious and there was enough leg room (not to mention high ceiling) for the stiff neck-inducing players.

Initially, we thought they would be uncomfortable with one another. It is hard to be congenial with a bunch of brawny players, especially if you will be banging and bruising each other in a few days. But there was a lot of good-natured ribbing amongst them as they shared pizza and pasta. Ren Ren Ritualo (DLSU), Miko Roldan (FEU) and Mike Bravo (UP), who used to be teammates way back in high school, kept all of us entertained with their funny comments. Prompted by Yasmine Hidalgo of Pinoycentral, the whole group began to address Miko as Mr. Action Star, in reference to his movie-star looks. By night's end, we had discovered that Mike was an expert on skin care. Alfie Grijaldo (NU) was the first to arrive, as usual. Mark Abadia (Adamson) was excitement personified. Paul Artadi (UE) was quiet yet confident.

UST could not send a representative since the pictorial and interview coincided with the Tigers' team-building seminar. Ateneo did not also send a representative since their coach insisted that if they were to be featured, it had to be the whole team and not just one player. It is interesting to note that the Blue Eagles is exerting effort in keeping to a minimum all their media-related activities such as granting interviews, etc. Could it be perhaps that they are changing their image from being congenial to being tough and mysterious players? One can only surmise that this could be due to last year's media hype which resulted in a lackluster and disappointing finish in last year's season.

All in all, the dinner was a lot of fun. The players were all relaxed, laid-

CONVERSATION/ P.C4

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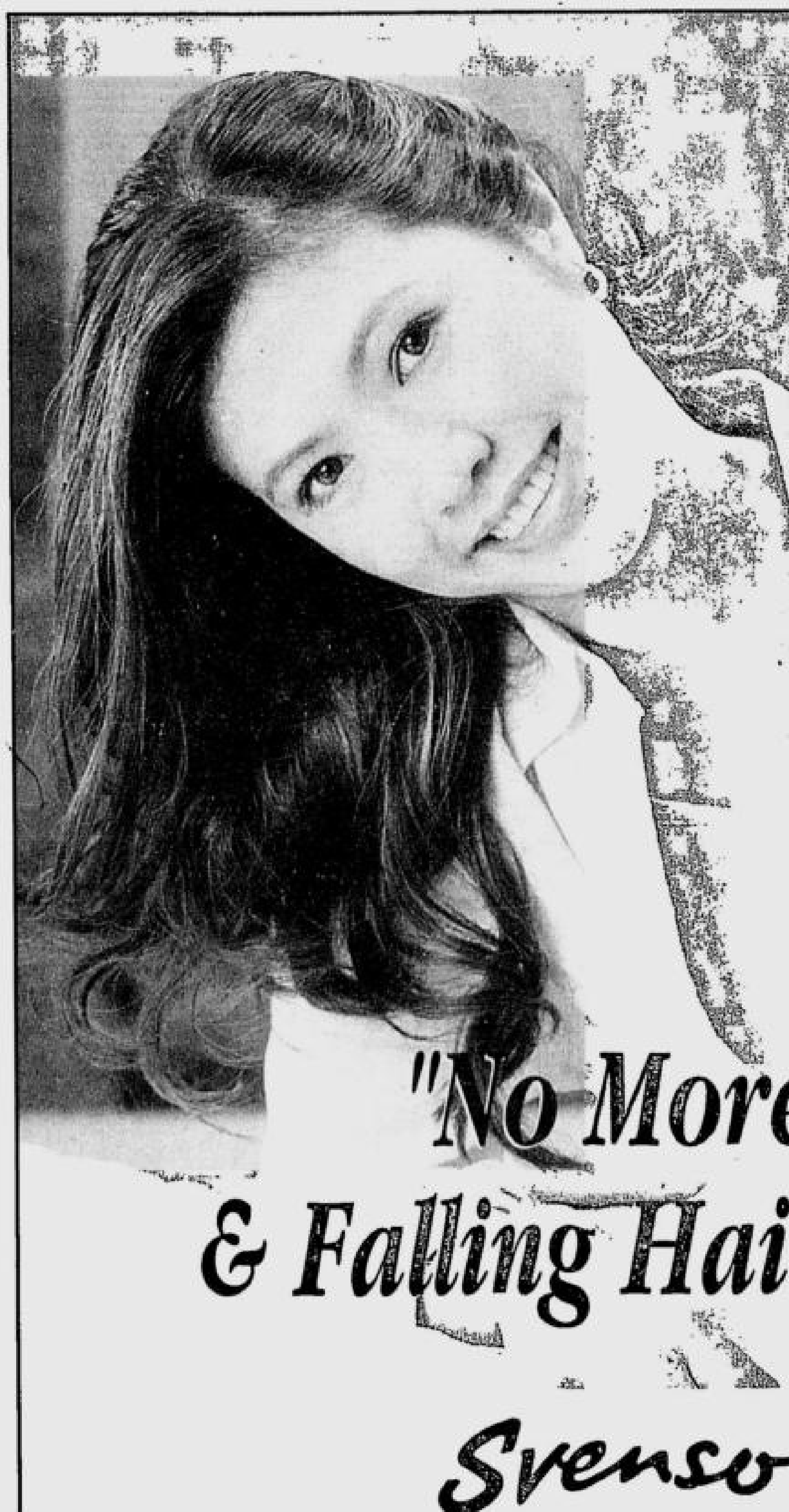

"My modelling and networking projects stressed me out to the point that I was losing A LOT of hair. **Excessive thinning and falling plus stunted hair growth made my hair appear limp with less volume. I was afraid I'd go bald!** I felt very insecure because, as a model, I have to maintain my look, and that includes having healthy hair. **I tried topical creams but they only gave temporary and insignificant results.** I didn't want to go on like this forever so I went to **Svenson International** for my hair-loss problem.

"The consultant recommended Svenson's specialized hair recovery treatments, including Tricho-DHT Inhibitor. **As a result, falling hair has decreased, my hair is much thicker, and there is real hair regrowth with longer-lasting results!** If I didn't go to Svenson, my problem would still go on and would become even worse. I'm relieved that Svenson recovered the lushness of my hair!"

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64TH UAAP: An all-out war

By Lesmes Solanoy and Jasmine Payo

ANOTHER war is about to break loose. On July 14, eight teams will start the battle for collegiate basketball supremacy as the 64th season of the UAAP unfolds. Amid the deafening cheers and the exciting drama, the color and the riveting action, these teams will be slugging it out not only for the much-coveted basketball crown, but also more importantly for school glory.

Adamson University

Placing dead last the past UAAP season, the Adamson Falcons had a disheartening year after failing to clinch a single victory.

The cornerstone of the Falcons' gradual rebuilding effort is new recruit Mark Abadia. A sensational high school player from Cebu and a former member of the RP team, the young off guard/forward has been thrust into the leadership role. Two other rookies are expected to help deliver some wins for Adamson. Burly Steve Rolan will be manning the painted area and Ramil Tagupa will be calling the shots for the Falcons.

UAAP chances: Definitely, it won't be a quick turn around for the Falcons. But with a bunch of young and talented recruits, it's not unlikely that Adamson may pull off a few surprises this year.

Fighting words: "There's nowhere but up for this team. That one point makes me very optimistic. No. 2, I think we have a new bunch of guys who have promise."—coach Luigi Trillo

Ateneo de Manila University

The Ateneo Blue Eagles had an impressive regular season, but ended up collapsing in the semis.

Although there seems to be less fanfare, Ateneo still has one of the formidable lineups this season. Save for Wesley Gonzales, everyone in the team will be back to wear the blue and white jersey. Expect Mythical Team member Enrico Villanueva and MVP Rich Alvarez to once again lead the pack. And with the recruit of highly touted LA Tenorio from San Beda high school, Ateneo has found someone to fill in the point guard position.

UAAP chances: Though the past two seasons may be disheartening for many fans, the Ateneo squad delivers an improved performance each year. Again, the Final Four is most likely in the bag.

Fighting words: "The guys are two-and-half years older. We've been through a lot of adversity. We know our character already and we know our weaknesses and strength. We'll really be competitive this year."—assistant coach Ricky Dandan

De La Salle University

They can't do it. This is what a lot has been saying about La Salle's chances of completing a grand slam. Not when Don Allado is no longer around. But the Green Archers will be one of the teams that will be sporting a new look.

Several stalwarts have left the team, and their shoes will be filled in by the rookies, most of whom are promising. A rookie-laden lineup is something the defending champions have not experienced in a long time.

Nevertheless, they still have the veterans to lead the way. Ren Ren Ritualo will be in his last season and is sure to go all out for the fourth straight crown. Helping him are point guard Mike Cortez and big man Adonis Santamaria. The three now become the deadly triumvirate for La Salle.

Although they can be contenders, injuries are plaguing the team. Willy Wilson, Mika Vainio, BJ Manalo and rookie Carlo Sharma are still nursing injuries.

UAAP chances: When it comes to La Salle, it is very hard to make a prediction. People said they couldn't do a back-to-back, but they did. And last year, many doubted they would even go to the Finals, and yet they managed to win the championship. Again, this year La Salle is not seeded, but it's possible they can make four in a row. Winning has become La Salle's tradition.

Fighting words: "We're still going to be competitive, we won't give up."—coach Franz Pumaren

Far Eastern University

As far as everyone was concerned, last season was going to be a UST-Ateneo Finals. No one really placed their bets on the FEU Tamaraws, until Miko Roldan made that amazing buzzer beater shot against Ateneo.

Right after the Finals, which La Salle took, the Tamaraws wasted no time and started to work. Forget about the loss and think about the future glory. No regrets and no tears were shed, all that they want is to make the return trip to the Finals.

Just recently, the Tamaraws copped the Fr. Martin title. Despite the departure of Celino Cruz and Edwin Bacani, FEU remains to be the major force to reckon with, due to the presence of Roldan, Rysal Castro and Leo Avenido, who had showed marked improvements, especially after their respective PBL stints.

UAAP chances: They are this year's top contender. No doubt about it. Everything is in place. The talent is there and so is the experience. And, yes, even the hunger. It is so visible in the eyes of the Tamaraws that their sights are set for the basketball crown alone. And that should be enough for other teams to be on the lookout for this team.

Fighting words: "Only a foolish coach will promise championship. Ang *mapa*-promise *namin* is that we will go out there prepared and ready to give our best."—coach Coy Banal

National University

After posting a handful of upset games last season, the NU Bulldogs placed sixth overall.

Veterans Chico Manabat, Alfie Grijaldo and Ariel de Castro are expected to carry the team once more. And, of course, Jeff Napa is once again tasked to provide sweet-shooting services.

UAAP chances: The Bulldogs still have no big man who can battle it out with some of the league's taller guys. But NU can sometimes pull through so other squads may again feel the Bulldogs' bite.

Fighting words: "They're always putting us down, *na* NU *lang yan*. But just like the Bulldogs, *kapag lalo mong inaaway, lalong lalaban 'yan.*"—forward Alfie Grijaldo

University of the East

Many were on the lookout for UE last year for several reasons—rookie sensation James Yap, along with big man Omar Liban Ali, and its flashy point guards Adrian Ronquillo and Paul Artadi, and the ever dependable veteran Aldwyn Manubag. Add to that the presence of a new coach and the support of a taipan.

This season will be different. There will be no Manubag and no Ali to lead the charges for the team. Coach Boysie Zamar will now call the shots for the team. While they still are competitive in the back court, the team is definitely wanting in size. Expect a speed game whenever the Warriors are playing. They have the materials for it and they eventually hope to make the Final Four cut with the run and gun style of play.

UAAP chances: It will really be a challenge for the Warriors to make it all the way to the Finals. But if their performance in the Fr. Martin Cup is to be a gauge, there is a possibility that they may pocket one of the Final Four slots. And then they can start from there. But whatever their performance, it will be an achievement for them.

Fighting words: "We'll always give our hearts' best and play as if it is our last game."—coach Boysie Zamar

University of the Philippines

Although placing at the near-bottom of last year's team standings, the UP Maroons had several close-game encounters with some of the top teams in the league.

The trio of Mark Jomalesa, Rodel Celo and Mike Bravo are again stepping up for the State U squad. Rob Bornan-

64TH/ p.C3

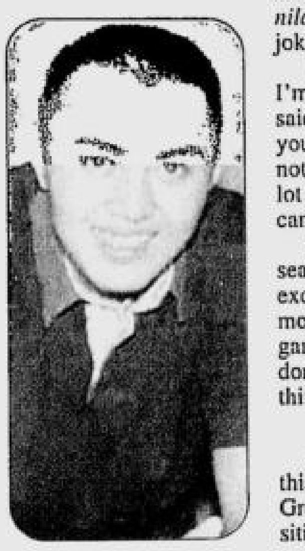
REN REN RITUALO

'I play because I'm having fun'

IT was during a DLSU-UST game in Loyola Gym a couple of years ago when we first saw him play. Because of the heavy rains, Don Allado and Dino Aldeguer were not able to make it to the game. The Tigers seemed assured of walking away with an easy victory. Then from nowhere came No. 4 who sank one shot after another like it was the easiest, most natural thing to do. While the others grappled and struggled with the ball, he swept past all of them as he made his shots. That game has gone down in UAAP history as one of its most memorable games. And the player who led the Green Archers to victory? Ren Ren Ritualo.

A man among the boys, that's how a basketball enthusiast once described Florencio "Ren Ren" Ritualo Jr. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he is a certified superstar of the UAAP. His contemporaries, even his opponents, all agree Ren Ren is one player not to be taken lightly.

And yet this formidable hardcourt general is still very much a kid at heart. Most people take basketball seriously, but for Ren Ren, basketball is a game. A game he has grown to love over the years.



First point

His father, Florendo Ritualo Sr., is a former PBA player. It is no wonder then that at an early age Ren Ren was already dribbling and shooting hoops in his makeshift court at home. "My Mom said 1 year old *ako* when I made my first shot," he enthuses.

His father, obviously, was his first mentor. "There were no hard and fast rules that my dad taught me at the beginning. We just played *pero parang* competition. *Hindi ako nagpapatalo sa kanya*," he recalls with fondness. "Of course at that time, *talo talaga nya ako*. Now *talo ko na s'ya*," he adds with a laugh.

It is obvious Ren Ren treasures his childhood memories of his Dad. To this day, his Dad gives him pointers after each game. His Mom was his first fan. "Before I used to get embarrassed whenever she came to a game, but as I got older *mas na*-appreciate *ko na nand'un s'ya*," he says. Even though his Mom is now based in the United States, she still takes time to come home and see her son play, especially during the championship.

It was in the streets, "*sa tabi-tabing kalye*" as he puts it, where he first started to learn the basic rules of the game. He was a fifth grader in San Beda when he made his first varsity team. He remembers his first win with great clarity. "It was in fifth grade, during the intrams. I remember my Mom was watching. *Medyo nahihiya pa ako kasi lumalabas pagka*-mama's boy *ko*," he narrates.

Does he ever feel like he is living out his father's dream? "*Siguro*, especially *d'un sa mga 'di n'ya na*-accomplish," he says. The dream of playing ball is a shared goal between father and son.

If there is a lesson his Dad has constantly reminded him of, it is the value of discipline. "Especially self-discipline," he stresses.

It is interesting to note that Ren Ren cannot find the right words to express his feelings for the game. "I play because I'm having fun," says the prolific player who led his college team to three UAAP championship crowns.

He also recently steered his PBL team, Welcoat, to victory. "I can't explain. It's natural. It's not effortless for me although there's hard work involved," he says in Taglish.

You know how it is when you ask someone to describe how he feels for a loved one? The person struggles with the right words to use, but it is clearly written all over the person's face how he exactly feels. The same applies to Ren Ren except that he is talking about basketball.

The gift

He is taken aback when asked if it has occurred to him he has a gift, an extraordinary talent for the game. "It hasn't occurred to me. '*Di ko iniisip 'yan kasi baka lumaki ulo ko eh. Sabi nga nila malaki na nga tingnan ulo ko*," he jokes around.

Is he just playing at humility? "No, I'm not... You know Michael Jordan said that if you become content with your game, you won't improve. I'm not content with my game. There's a lot of room for improvement," he says candidly.

Despite having played for several seasons, Ren Ren says he still gets excited at every game. He says he gets more excited than nervous during a game. "*Parang* I get into a zone. I don't want to talk. I don't hear anything. I just forget," he says.

Crunch time

The 22-year-old small forward and this year's Captain Ball of the DLSU Green Archers is in an unenviable position. All the accolades and victories come with responsibility, the pressure to maintain his stature. It is his last year in the UAAP and he is expected to lead his team to a fourth straight victory. Apart from all of that, he is under a greater amount of pressure since he is expected not only to not miss the shot, but come up with big numbers.

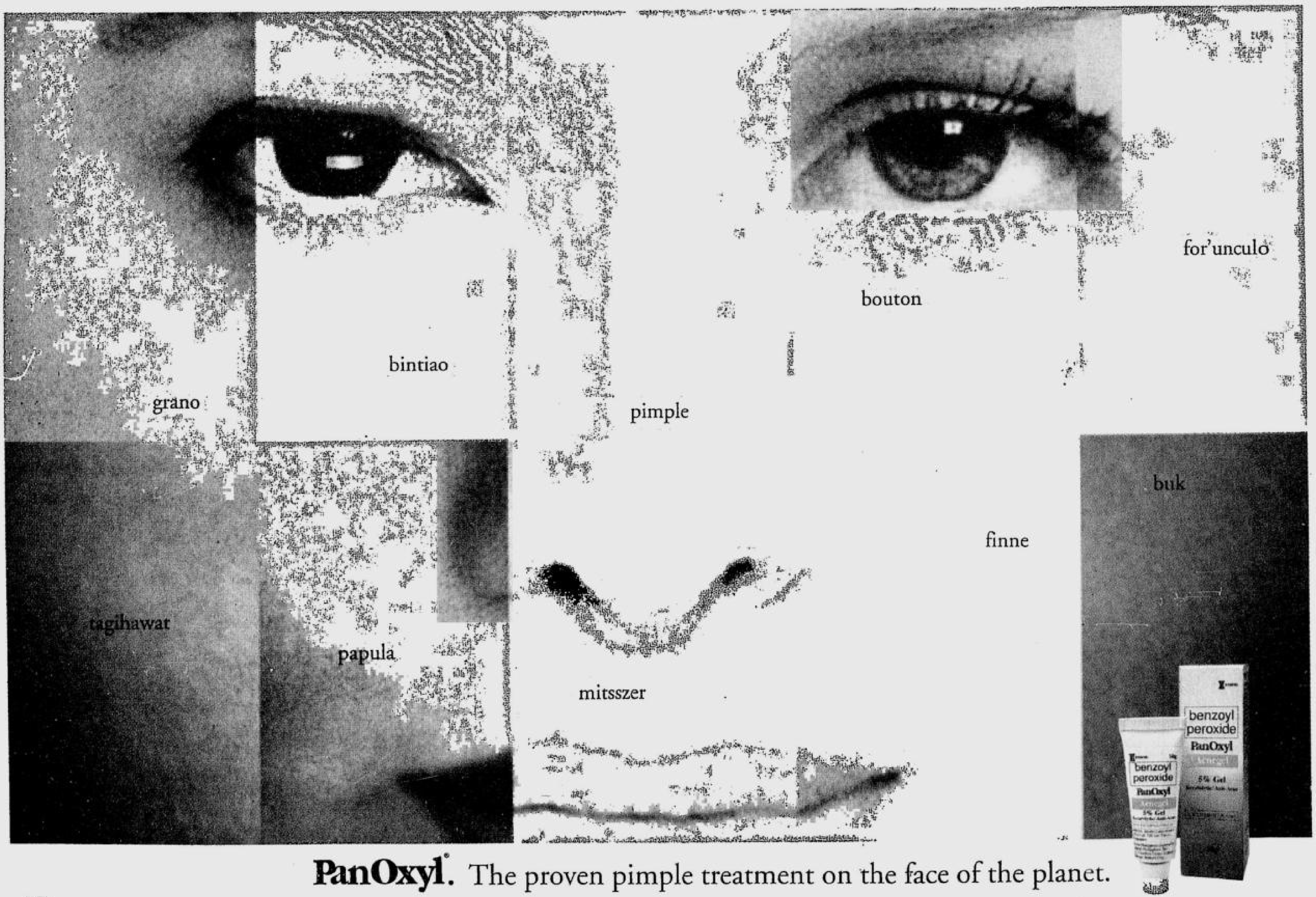
"Everybody's under pressure. *Kahit* rookie *ka, malaki ang* pressure *sa 'yo*. But I have learned over the years to handle pressure. I don't look for the game. I just let the game come to me. '*Di na gaya ng dati na sobrang gigil*," he explains. He admits it took years before he learned to have patience. "I tried too hard before."

DLSU has a relatively young team this year. Ren Ren acknowledges there is immense pressure on him. "I need all the support of my teammates, but rest assured I'll play my best in every game. We are making history here," he says.

It is public knowledge Ren Ren is going pro next year. Does this mean there is a chance he will play soft and safe this year in preparation for next year? "No! The more you play 'soft,' the more chances of getting injured. I play every game as if it were my last," he says. "You're only as good as your last game, so you might as well give it your best, right?"

And at the rate Ren Ren is going, this season is just the beginning of a long and fruitful basketball career.

Jules Alcantara



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Blue versus Green

GAME preview: Who's going to win in the Ateneo-La Salle opening game this Sunday?

Lesmes Solanoy: It's nice to say La Salle, but Ateneo is favored with their formidable lineup. But then again, one doesn't win with brawn alone. It takes heart to triumph. And it has been shown that the Green Archers have both brawn, though not as good as Ateneo, and heart, which is lacking in the Blue Eagles. So just like last year, I guess first round goes to DLSU.

Jasmine Payo: Of course, I'm betting on Ateneo. The Eagles had two consecutive disheartening seasons and that alone is motivation enough. They're out to prove they have indeed learned their lessons, so I think whoever Ateneo is meeting up in the opening game would be dealing with a very hungry team. It just turned out to be La Salle.

Season preview: Which team has the edge this season?

J: Although La Salle has the championship experience, I think Ateneo has an edge over character. The Eagles have gone through two roller-coaster seasons and I think they've already learned a lot on how they function as a team. They undoubtedly have the skills the past years, but the intangibles weren't exactly there yet. All the hype must have been distracting. This season, though, I see a much humbled team. They're more motivated and focused on their team goals.

L: There are three main factors to consider: Lineup, experience and heart. Obviously, La Salle has the edge in the experience and heart area, offsetting any deficiency in the lineup. Ateneo is definitely heftier, but the winning tradition is on La Salle's side. If Ateneo still fails to develop the fighter's heart, then they might end up watching its rival bringing home the honors once again.

If there is one player who you would want to play for your team, who would that be and why?

L: That would be a coach's prerogative, but as a fan I would not want anyone from Ateneo donning the jersey of La Salle. It just won't fit, if you know what I mean. Green and white wouldn't look good on Alvarez or Membrere or anyone else. Besides, the team performs well in its current roster of players.

J: Well, honestly, it has to be Renren Ritualo. I think any team in the league would want to have him in their lineup. A shoo-in for the PBA, so who wouldn't want him? But really, the guy is a great shooter. And even if he has been missing shots, he still won't be afraid to take the crucial ones. I also admire his leadership and the way he inspires other players.

Would you trade places?

L: Definitely not! La Salle through and through. What is a hyped-up lineup compared to seven straight finals appearance and a grand slam? Need I say more?

J: The three championships are tempting, but no, never! (Laughs) Win or lose, it's the school we choose!

Name some good things about your rival team.

J: Well, La Salle has some cute players in their squad. But, of course, Ateneo still has better-looking players. (Laughs) But seriously, La Salle is one consistent team. You just have to admire them for that. They also have that confidence down the stretch. Whether their opponent is cutting the lead or they're the ones playing catch up, you'll see their composure. So not surprisingly, they almost always pull through.

L: Admittedly, Ateneo is seeded higher this season. After everything they had gone through, I guess it is only proper to confer to them the favored status. And it would be good for them especially when playing against La Salle, who relies on experience.

Do you think it would be an ADMU-DLSU Finals match?

J: Last year could have been the Ateneo-La Salle showdown. But this season, I think either one of them will end up facing FEU.

L: That's hard to tell. First, they must be able to make it to the Final Four. Then from there, Ateneo and La Salle must make sure that they crush their opponents to guarantee a blockbuster Finals. Too bad, Ateneo bungled its chance for a return trip to the Finals last year when La Salle was just waiting all the time. Unfortunately, better and stronger teams have emerged like FEU, thus lessening the chance of an Ateneo-La Salle finals.

To do or not to do, that is the question

Carlos Garchitorena & September Mahino

DEAR Caloy and Sep,

I met this guy on the Net and we did cyber, you know, the safest sex, on the Net. Now he wants to meet me... and do it. At first it was okay. I wanted to do it, too, no strings attached. Just do it *kumbaga*. *'Yun nga lang*, I'm afraid. What if I get pregnant, or my future husband won't like "used," or if he (cyber lover) will babble? I'm doing this 'cause I'm bored. I got a flat life. I want a change. Do you think it's okay? I don't sleep around, you see. What am I going to do now? Hope you can advise me. Thanks.

ANGEL

This is by far the dumbest letter we have received since Chatroom started. Verbosity cannot hide the fact that Angel is either a sad human being probably craving for attention, or one of my ex's friends having a good laugh right now.

If you want to have sex, Angel, then have sex. Of course, there's a probability that you'll get pregnant. There's an equal chance that you'll get STD (sexually transmitted disease). But if you have nothing to live for in your flat life (dreams, ambitions, goals) then, by all means, go ahead. I refuse to take any sort of responsibility because I know you know what's right and what's wrong according to your own principles.

There is nothing wrong with exploring your sexuality. It's just the manner in which you go about it that really irks me.

Why don't you try to find a living, breathing human? Start with that. We'll work on character selection later. So you think thus guy is better in the real world than online? I bet the reason he does it online is because he's too stupid to go out on a date and get laid the conventional way.

Survey says: 80 percent find nothing wrong with a hobby like surfing the Net; 31 percent actually uses the Net for different purposes like shopping for gifts, visiting porn sites and downloading music (normal people do that); 86 percent agree with me that you'd be better off buying a dildo instead of a mouse.

CALOY

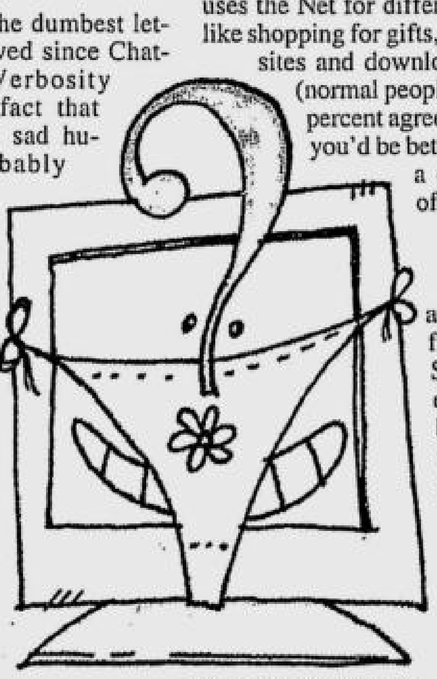


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Yes, you are most definitely bored. So bored that even a no-brainer situation compels you to seek other people's opinions. (I have a sick feeling you're just doing this for laughs.)

If you really want to have sex, then no one can stop you. You obviously know what can happen, so we don't have to remind you about that. I just don't get why you would want to do it with some perv you met on the Net.

I'm not promoting promiscuity or careless behavior. In fact, I'd rather have you stick to the safer option. But your mind seems to be made up already and all you are asking from us is a little nudge. I'm not gonna give you that.

SEP

Virtual fans

By Jasmine W. Payo

ROOTING for your favorite UAAP team and dissing your rival opponents have taken the virtual route. Any UAAP enthusiast who has access to the Internet has probably checked out these online forums at least once. They have become popular, mainly for the entertainment they provide. And just like any live basketball game, there are the cheering and heckling from supporters, emotions flare up and arguments soon ensue. But aside from these voluble, obsessive fans, you can get info from long-time league observers who regularly dish out their latest game analyses and team assessment. But you'd also find amusement from girls and gays who gush at the league's heartthrobs, and those who just get a kick out of posting nasty comments.

Currently, the UAAP Forum of Pinoyexchange remains to be the most popular. Pinoycentral is also gaining a following while several university websites like Ateneo's Atenista.net, La Salle's Greenarcher.net and UP's Peyups.com also carry this online feature.

And now that the UAAP season draws near, these online forums are once again starting to kick off. 2bU! asked four active UAAP Netizens to share their passion for these online forums.

What do you like most about the UAAP forums?

Erman: You learn about the latest scoops even before the season starts. You get to know the rookies who will don your school color, and know who's eligible to play or not.

Eagle: The inside information and the general interest. Plus there are people with whom you can talk UAAP to 24/7.

Nuss: There's the type of info that you don't get in newspapers, but the gossip type you receive when you mingle with journalists and people close to varsity players.

What type of messages do you post?

Eagle: Analysis, pro-Ateneo posts, gushing at players and defending my favorite players!

11#UST_guard'98: Informative messages.

Erman: Mostly *kwentos*, like the games I've seen.

Nuss: My posts are usually analysis of teams. But once in a while, if somebody asks who this athlete is, I help out especially if I know who the athlete is.

Do you engage in flame wars (posting a mean-spirited comment and/or responding with another nasty remark)?

Nuss: As much as possible, I don't flame. But then some comments tend to stray so I correct their posts.

Erman: I do flame sometimes, especially when a point raised is not right.

Eagle: Most of the time I don't because it's their opinion that they post there. But sometimes, I really lose my temper.

11#UST_guard'98: Yes, I was called *sinungaling*. I'm also bothered *doon sa mga* "Who's got the prettiest girlfriend among UAAP players?" type of posts.

Any improvements you'd like to see?

Nuss: The moderator should be responsible for whatever is disseminated in the fobrum. Other than that, I don't know why they regard it as cool to diss La Sallians. Some of them are already below the belt and some of the arguments stray from the topic.

Do you still visit or post in the UAAP forums during off-season?

Eagle: Yup! Because I miss the UAAP talk.

Overall, what keeps you hooked?

Nuss: What drives me to participate is that I get to know more about the UAAP and at the same time contribute to the discussion with what I know.

Erman: But mainly, it's because UAAP is all heart, all pride, all passion.

64TH UAAP . . .

(From page C2)

cin, last year's Brazilian rookie, has also reportedly showed marked improvement in his dribbling and rebounding skills.

UAAP chances: UP coach Ryan Gregorio noted last season that he's in the process of rebuilding the team. If their improved performance in several pre-UAAP season tournaments is any indication, they seem to be on the right track. So expect UP to climb up the team standing ladder this year.

Fighting words: "Coach said last year that we're rebuilding the team. Right now, we believe we're a stronger team and we're a contender this year."—off guard/small forward Mike Bravo

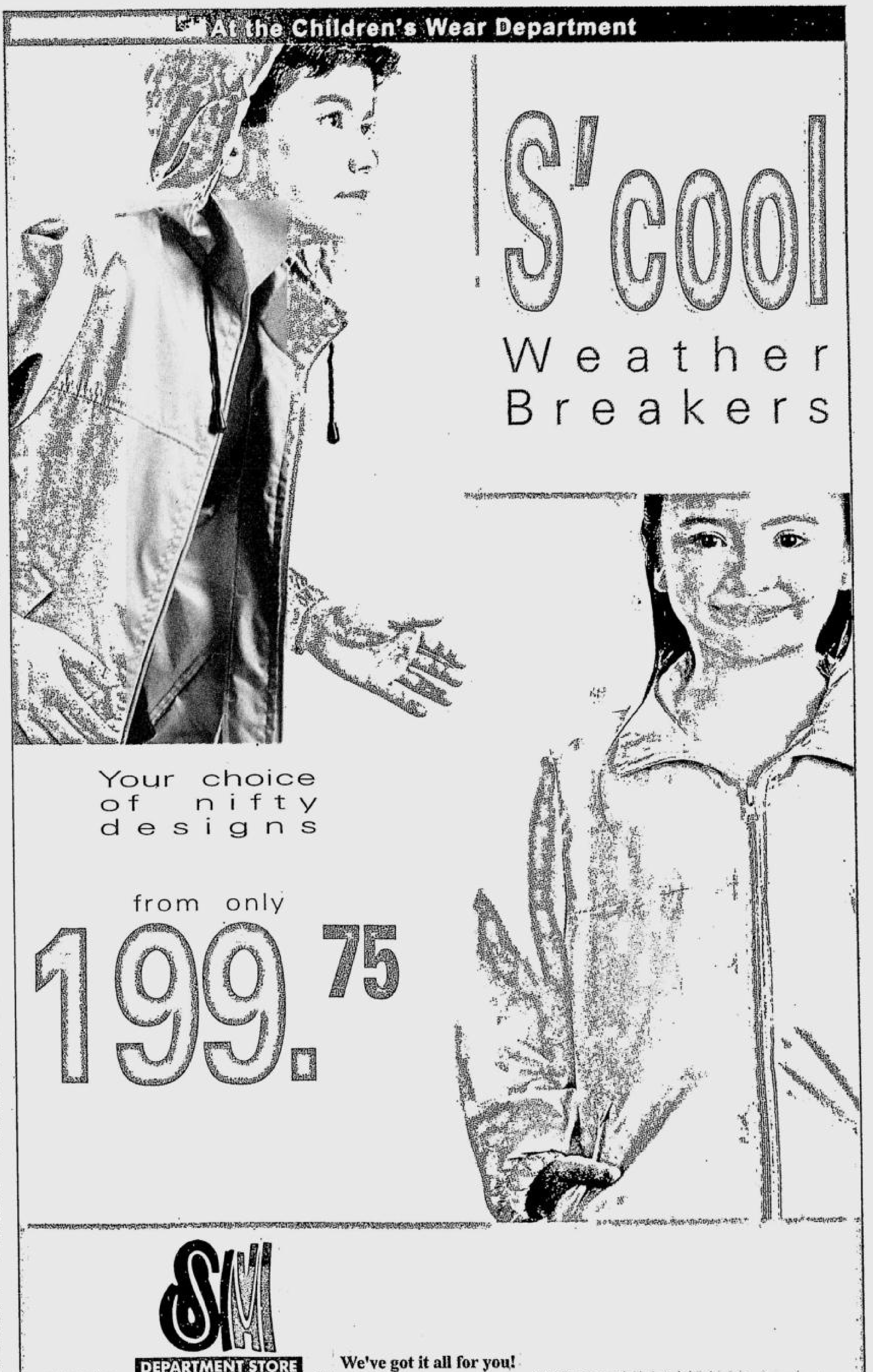
University of Santo Tomas

UST was all over the sports pages last year. Basketball aficionados were dead sure the Tigers would be top contender for the UAAP title.

Like La Salle, UST will be a surprisingly different team this year. Gilbert Lao, Melchor Latoreno, Cyrus Baguio and Marvin Ortiguerra will no longer be suiting up for the Tigers. Thus, the task of bringing the team to the Final Four rests on the shoulders of Ralph Emerson Oreta and the high-flying Niño Gelig. Although they may not be this year's favorite, Coach Aric del Rosario thinks it can work to their advantage. In the past, it was when people least expected it that the Tigers pulled off a surprise. Thus, without the pressure this year, the Tigers may get back in the Finals.

UAAP chances: Bumpy and shaky. This seems to be the road that UST will take. The loss of its players is really a major blow to the Tigers. Given the strength of the other teams, it may be difficult for UST to realize its goal of booking a return engagement in the Finals. However, Coach Aric is no ordinary coach. He has always been known to deliver when his back is against the wall.

Fighting words: "*Wala masyadong* pressure *ngayon, e mas gusto ko 'yon kasi 'pag walang* pressure *dun kami nanalo*."—coach Aric del Rosario



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Conversation with top UAAP players

(From page C1)

back, neat, not at all sweaty and grimy. The only time that they got a bit nervous was when they had their pictures taken. But, c'mon guys, you can quit basketball and become the next runway superstars, right?

What are your expectations for your team this season?

Paul Artadi: Well, target *namin* final four. Last year, we were one game away from making it to the final four, so hopefully this year we will be able to do it.

Alfie Grijaldo: To make it to the final four.

Mark Abadia: For us winning *lang*. (Adamson failed to win a single game in last year's UAAP season.)

Miko Roldan: *Pero* he (Mark Abadia) wasn't with the team yet last year.

So hopefully this year Adamson will do better. What about FEU?

MR: We expect this year to make it to the final four or the finals. Pero this year, we are really hoping to become champion. Last year was really *sayang*. (FEU squared off against DLSU for the championship after defeating twice to beat ADMU in the semis.) *Si* Ren Ren *kasi eh!* (Laughs)

Mike Bravo: Final four and championship.

Compared to the other years, your team did well last year.

MB: Hmm... yeah. We had a couple of games where we would lose by a few points only so we had a lot of close games. We would lose by 3 or 4 points. It was really in the end game but our team this year has gained maturity. Plus we only lost one player.

What about DLSU? Are we going four-ward?

Ren Ren Ritualo: As for my team and myself, I expect that we play our best in every game. Four-ward? *S'yempre!* (Grins)

MARK Abadia (Adamson Falcons)

Personal expectations.

PA: As a team leader, I hope I can bring my team to the finals.

AG: As a senior in the team, I'll make sure *na mai*-relay *ko sa* team *kung ano'ng sinasabi ng* coach *namin.*

What about you, Mark? You're a rookie who was one of the South's unbeatable players, and now you are expected to carry a team that hasn't won anything (Mark is one of Cebu's top players).

MA: *S'yempre mahirap din. Pero nakapag*-adjust *na ako sa bago kong* team. I just talked to my teammates *na tulungan nila ako kasi* rookie *lang ako.* But I have gelled with the team.

What about you, Miko? More crucial end game shots? (One of last year's memorable moments is Roldan's crucial basket in the semis game of FEU against ADMU)

MR: It's my last year in the UAAP so I hope to enjoy my last year. Of course, there's added pressure since I am also the captain ball, we really want to win *na* this year, and of course, it's my last year.

MB: Personal intention? (Everyone laughs.) Easy *lang kayo!*

MR: Mike, *kain ka muna!*

RR: *Galing ka sa* Mass, no?

MB: Seriously, *sana mag*-change *naman 'yung* teams *na napapasok sa* final four.

RR: *'Wag naman ganun!*

MB: *Hindi,* what I mean is, *sana makapasok naman kami. Sana makasama namin ang* La Salle, FEU. *Sana madagdag naman kami dun!*

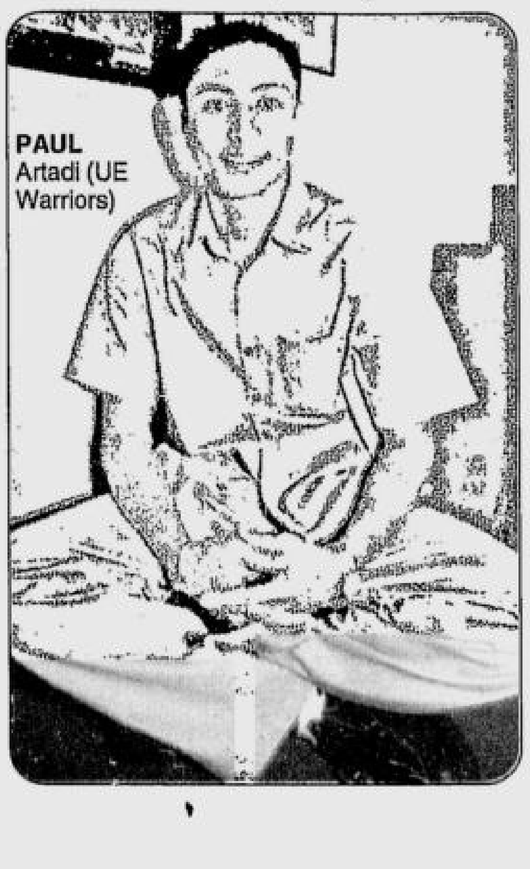
ALFIE Grijaldo (NU Bulldogs)

All: Woooh!

RR: *Siguro* on my part, *'yung* leadership *sa* team, since I'm the captain ball now. *Kasi tingin ko sa* team *ko, bata lahat.* And of course, maturity *sa* practice and *sa* game, both on and off the court. *Pero may* problem *tayo sa* off the court. (Laughs out loud!) *Pero* seriously, I have to be a role model *kasi* a lot of our veterans have already left the team.

How do you manage to balance studies and basketball, especially now that the season is about to start? Do you guys even go to class?

PA: *Kami sa* UE we really have to go to class. If we miss games, we need to give an excuse letter. *'Pag madami kang bagsak*, that's the only time that the school intervenes *pero di pa naman nangyayari sa akin 'yun.*



PAUL Artadi (UE Warriors)

AG: *Mahirap kasi ang tagal ng* practice *namin* and *minsan di na kami nakakapasok. Kaya minsan 'pag may problema* we talk to our teachers *na matulungan din kami sa* schedule.

Do you really get to learn in school or is your focus really on basketball?

MA: Honestly, basketball *ang* focus *talaga.*

MR: Well, for us, when we enroll, we make sure that we get the schedule that will not conflict with practice. *Kaya* I think it's easier for us. *'Pag di kami kunyari nakakapasok,* they make sure that we still learn *kasi* they give us special classes or tutorials.

Mike, you're from UP which is known for high academic standards. How do you cope?

MB: We make sure and they make sure that there is time for academics. We adjust the schedule of subjects that we get with our time for practice.

RR: *Mahirap talaga i*-balance *kasi kulang 'yung* 24 hours *eh. Siguro* time management *lang talaga. Nakaka*-survive *naman.* Actually I'm doing my thesis already.

If there's one UAAP player (not a teammate) whom you admire, who would it be and why?

PA: *Siguro si* Cyrus Baguio *pero* he's not playing this year. *Sayang, kasi* he can dunk and the crowd loves that.

AG: *Si* Rich Alvarez. *Mabait siya sa laro* and even off the court. Okay *siya.*

MA: *Si* Joe Lipa! (Laughs!) *Hindi, si* Miko, *si* Mike and *si* Ren Ren. Well, I'm supposed to watch out for Gelig and *'yung* No. 3 *ng* Ateneo. (Wesley Gonzales, who is no longer playing for the Blue Eagles due to disciplinary problems.)

MR: *Ako, si* Ren Ren Ritualo!

RR: *Pwede ba 'yung kapareho mo naman sa* position!

MR: *Hindi,* seriously *si* Ren 'coz of his leadership. *Sana meron din kami nun sa* team *namin.*

MB: For me, *'yung mga katabi ko* (Ren and Miko). *Naku, baka sabihin nila sobrang* biased *ko na!* (Laughs)

RR: *Si* Mike Cortez. Ah, okay, not teammate... well, *lahat ng* Bedista *sa* UAAP.

Wesley Gonzales, one of ADMU's top gunners, is not playing anymore due to disciplinary problems. How do you feel about this?

PA: Well, I guess *tama lang 'yon.* We also have someone in our team *na natanggal din kahit na* defensive player namin *'yun* 'coz of disciplinary problems.

AG: I guess okay *lang* whether *nandun siya or wala. Ganun pa rin.*

Will it affect your team strategy that he is no longer with the team?

AG: *Ganun pa rin. Pero s'yempre sayang, kasi mas may* challenge *dahil malakas siya, matangkad siya.*

MR: Okay *lang.* You know in our team, the same thing happened. One of our players is no longer with us *dahil din sa* disciplinary problems.

MB: *S'yempre* I'm happy *kasi wala nang magbabantay.* Seriously, I feel sorry for him *kasi namimis*-interpret *'yung* the way he acts *pero* disciplinarian *eh, ganun talaga. Dapat naman din talaga na meron kang* discipline *sa sarili mo.* That's it—*di ko rin alam masyado* what happened, *eh.*

RR: I feel bad for Ateneo *kasi* he's a big loss to their team. He's a big factor in the team. *Sayang, kasi aminin natin,* he's a big guy *na kayang' magdala ng bola,* defender *pa.* He's like the best defensive player *sa* wings *nila.*

Let's face it, girls get easily attracted to basketball players. Is it easier for you to court or pick up a girl?

PA: Yeah. *S'yempre,* like *sa* school *namin,* as varsity players, *madami ang bumabati sa amin. Pero sabi nila* snob *daw kami* or sometimes they text and they say, "*Ang* snob *mo naman, ang taray mo naman.*" *Hindi ko na lang pinapansin.*

AG: *Oo naman.*

MA: *Sa akin mahirap, kasi hinahanap nila gwaping di ba?* They say *wala naman akong kwenta kasi* player *lang ako, di naman ako gwaping.* (Grins)

ALL: Woooh! *Pa*-humble!

MR: For me, hindi, because I'm really super *mahiyain.*

In one of the online forums, there were people who posted and said that you're a silent heartthrob. How do you feel about that?

MR: Huh? *Di ko alam 'yun.* I guess I'm flattered *pero wala lang.* (Blushes)

MB: No it's not easy for me at all. Well, I guess it's easy if the girl is flirting with you. But if it's serious, *mahirap.*

Okay, for example, there are two other guys who are courting a girl aside from you. Would you say you have an edge?

MB: *O, sige na nga, sabihin na natin na may* advantage *talaga siguro. Siguro malakas din ang dating kasi matangkad—matangkad lang ha?* I didn't say *gwapo!*

RR: *Hindi, kasi* shy type *ako eh!* (Everyone laughs!)

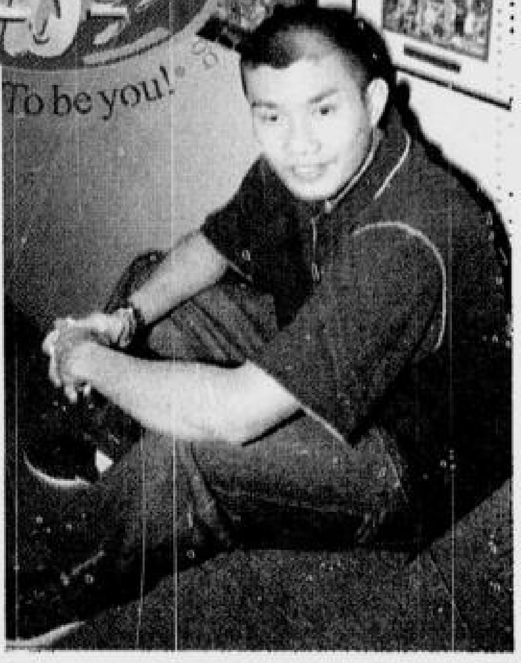
For those who have a girlfriend, is it harder that you have one?

MA: *Magastos!* (Laughs)

PA: It's hard *kasi kulang sa* time. You practice and you're tired *pero* you have to call her.

MR: Yeah, it's harder *kasi 'yung* time that is supposed to be spent *para sa ibang bagay, nahahati pa* because of the girlfriend.

RR: *Siguro,* but I can't say it's harder *kasi* she



MIKE Bravo (UP Maroons)

serves as your inspiration. It's not gonna be hard if you're inspired, *di ba? Siguro* it's just a matter of time management.

How do you handle distractions or temptations, meaning girls, gimmick, etc.?

MB: As for me, I really discipline myself. You really have to sacrifice.

AG: Sacrifice *talaga kasi baka mahuli ka nung isa.* (Laughs)

MA: *Ako tulog na lang.*

If there is one issue in the UAAP that you feel affects you, what is it and why?

MR: *Siguro* the bad calls or bad refereeing. Sometimes, the calls favor a certain group too much.

What about the aggressive recruitment of Fil-foreigner players?

AG: For me, it makes the game more challenging.

MA: Okay *lang kasi* some teams do that *para lalong lumaki 'yung* chances *nila.*

MR: For me, okay *lang* as long as they're really Filipinos.

MB: I personally think that it is an advantage *kasi* these players need a two-year residency before they can play in the UAAP. We are protected in that sense.

RR: The level of competition goes higher. The players are more challenged to practice harder to be able to match up with the more aggressive or more skillful players.

But do you feel that homegrown talents are getting less chances?

MR: I guess *nawawalan rin pero di naman porket* Fil-foreigner *eh mas magaling* or *mas may* edge.

MB: *May* advantage *nga lang sila.*

RR: Yup, I agree, *pero madami din namang* local players *na* just as good if not better than them.

How many are Fil-foreigners among the top 10 players in the UAAP?

RR: Well, there's Mike Cortez.

MB: Also Ralph Bornancin who's half-Brazilian.

When asked what their future plans are, they all said the same thing—play in the professional league. Expected, right? They *are* the future of Philippine basketball.

VENUE: NATIONAL SPORTS GRILL,
3/F GREENBELT, MAKATI CITY

MIKO Roldan (FEU Tamaraws)

REN REN Ritualo (DLSU Green Archers)

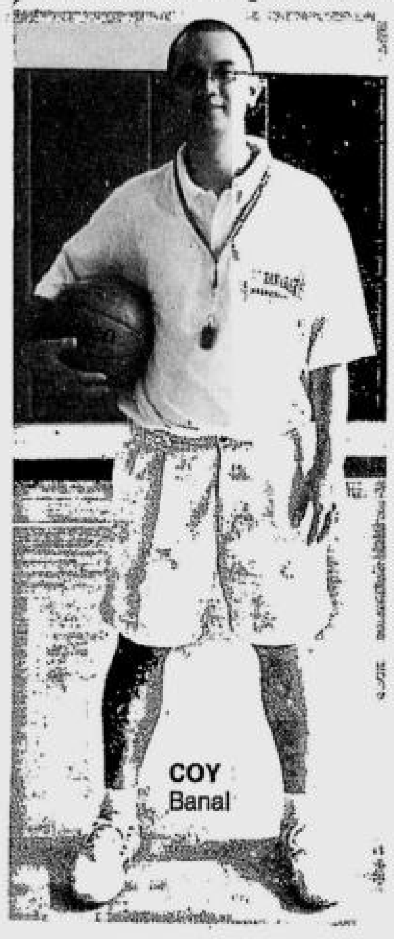
The stars behind the sidelines

By Chrissy D. Icamina and Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondents

THEY say that when a team wins, credit is showered on the players; but when a team loses, most people heap the blame on the coach, the unsung MVP behind the spotlight.

Without coach Luigi Trillo, for instance, the Adamson Falcons would be unable to fly. Without Ryan Gregorio, the UP Maroons would not be able to put up a fight. And without Coy Banal, the FEU Tamaraws would be rendered paralyzed.

Away from the sound of the leather bouncing on hardwood, let's take a peek at the area between the bleachers and the basketball court as three young UAAP basketball coaches reveal things about the game—and themselves.



COY Banal

LUIGI TRILLO

What is your philosophy in life?

I know it's overused, but something that can't kill you will only make you stronger. I think another thing is that, wherever you go, you will have problems; it's how you deal with it. I think with that you could always be an optimist. If you have that approach in life, you'll always find it in you to be happy.

What is your current love life status?

Well, I have a girlfriend and I've been with her for a very long time—six-and-a-half years.

Are you planning to get married?

At this stage, obviously, you have plans. At my age, I'm 25 going on 26. If you [have been going steady] that long with a girl, it's either you're planning your next step or not. But right now, she's also busy with her work and I with mine. It's not our main priority although we make time for each other.

If the military operation against the Abu Sayyaf were a big basketball game and you are the coach of the Armed Forces, what would your strategy be?

I'd really egg on my boys, man! There are different ways of handling it. I would really find a way to motivate them and just go out and flat play them, no holds barred. I mean, these guys are bullies. I think these guys are arrogant and aren't really that good. Manpower wise, I think we have them. I just have to find my way as a coach to have a strategy, motivate and bust their butts.

LUIGI Trillo PHOTOS BY CATHY YOUNG

If you didn't go into basketball, where would you be right now?

Probably I'd be a businessman because I think that would really entice me to make something out of myself.

What business would that be?

I would look at something that I appreciate, something that would really catch my attention. Probably hotels, the wine business or something connected with sports. You can say I overachieve sometimes. If there's one thing my dad said about me, it is that I'm a go-getter. They said I couldn't do this, I couldn't do that and I did. I want to prove people wrong. Modesty aside, I think I'm the youngest PBA assistant coach and the youngest head coach. People said I wouldn't be able to do it. I think you just have to work hard and if you persevere, like they say the river will always beat the rock. I feel that's true. If you really want something, you should go get it.

RYAN GREGORIO

What is your guilty pleasure?

When I was younger I enjoyed going out at night, drinking with friends. The guilt feelings come in when I'm spending more time with my friends than with my girlfriend.

What is your philosophy in life?

My philosophy in life is you just have to do the right things every time. Just be happy. Don't step on another person's foot and work hard. If you're going to be a success, do it through your own merits and not by using other people.

How is your relationship with your players outside the court?

Since the age gap is not really big, whenever I'm outside the court I treat them like my friends. But there is always this certain respect that I want them to deal with. If we're inside the court, there should be a player-coach relationship. Outside the court, we can be friends for as long as they don't cross the line.

If the military operation against the Abu Sayyaf were a big basketball game and you are the coach of the Armed Forces, what would your strategy be?

I believe in preparing before a war. Usually, I analyze my opponents. I look at their strengths and weaknesses. The important thing about basketball and the game of war is you should always be ready before you jump into the action. Basically, I have to scout my opponent well *para* I'll know where I can pounce them.

If you didn't go into basketball, where would you be right now?

I would love to be a basketball commentator on TV. I do it on the side but now my schedule is very hectic. Two of my favorites are: coaching and talking about basketball on TV.

How do you see yourself 10 years from now?

Maybe I'll still be coaching. But I hope I'll have more time for my other passion which is being a basketball analyst. I'll still be living a happy life with my family.

COY BANAL

What's your idea of a perfect date?

Once in a while, my wife and I go fine dining. *Pero simple lang kami. 'Yung* when we go to see a movie, *masaya na kami.*

If the military operation against the Abu Sayyaf were a big basketball game and you are the coach of the Armed Forces, what would your strategy be?

Ang motivation *ko [sa kanila]* is No. 1, love—*'yung pagmamahal nila sa trabaho, 'yung serbisyo at pagmamahal sa bansa.* So *doon siguro mabe*-base *'yung* motivation *ko.* Plus the fact *na gusto nilang umuwi nang buo kasi may mga uuwian silang pamilya.* Don't get yourself killed.

If you didn't go into basketball, where would you be right now?

Sa sales *o* business *kasi, 'yung* confidence *na binigay ng* basketball *magagamit ko doon sa trabahong 'yun.* And I love meeting people and talking to them. For me, that's the challenge of closing a sale.

RYAN Gregorio

How do you see yourself 10 years from now?

I believe [basketball] *ang* calling *ko. So hindi malayong mangyari na* after 10 years I'd still be in basketball because I love the game so much and I love teaching people. I love interacting and talking to [my players] about anything, not only about basketball.

How is your relationship with your players outside the court?

When I became the head coach of FEU, that's the day when God showed me to build a relationship with the players. Outside the basketball court, okay *kami.* When they have problems, they go to me and ask for advice. *'Pag wala silang ginagawa,,* they visit me *doon sa bahay,* and *'yung* relationship *din nila sa mga anak ko* is *parang pamilya, parang kaibigan.*

Who is Coy Banal outside the basketball court?

I'm a Christian. In fact, churchmate *ko nga si* [Ateneo Blue Eagle] Paul Tanchi. I attend Bible studies [on] Friday nights or when I have free time. I also love reading books, especially about basketball.

What is your philosophy in life?

There are no shortcuts to success. If you want to be successful, you have to exert a lot of effort.

What advice can you give to student-athletes?

Kailangan maintindihan nila 'yung responsibility *nila* as a student-athlete, and not as an athlete-student. *Kailangan makita nila ang* priorities *nila.* You are a student first, then an athlete. *Dapat pagbutihin mo ang pag-aaral mo kung 'di, babagsak ka, hindi ka makakapaglaro,* so it goes together.

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2. A computer-generated raffle number will be assigned for each Express Teller card number enrolled in Check-Free Payments which will be drawn at the end of the promo period. To qualify, you must have a minimum total payment amount of ₱500.00 within the promo period.
3. Just pay your bills from any of the more than 100 merchants through the Express Teller ATM, Express Phone or BPI Express Online.
4. To determine the cash prize, all payments made within the promo period shall be computed (excluding inter-account payments).
5. There will be five (5) winners. Each winner shall receive a minimum cash prize of ₱20,000.00 and a maximum of ₱100,000.00.

   In cases where the cardholder whose computed total payments are below ₱20,000, he/she will receive ₱20,000. And if he/she paid more than ₱100,000, he/she will receive ₱100,000. Bonus cash prizes will be computed separately.
6. **Bonus Cash Prizes: An additional ₱10,000.00 will be given to the winner if he/she meets any of the following conditions during the promo period:
   - Enrolled in Express Bills and/or paid at least once through BPI Express Online
   - Enrolled a new or additional reference number and paid this reference number during the promo period
   - Has at least five reference numbers enrolled (excluding BPI, BPI Family Bank and/or BPI Direct accounts)
7. The draw will be held at 10:00 AM at the BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City on August 24, 2001. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the draw.
8. A depositor can win only once during the draw. If two or more of your accounts are drawn, the account with the higher cash prize will be declared as the winning account.
9. Winners will be notified by registered mail. A winner's ad shall be published in at least one major newspaper. Winners should agree to have their names and/or photographs published.
10. Prizes are tax-free and shall be credited to the winner's Express Teller account within seven (7) working days after the draw date.
11. All employees of the BPI Unibank, Image Dimensions, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified.
12. All accounts closed/terminated, dormant, under litigation, garnished on or before the draw date and all FCDU, government, corporate and non-individual accounts (including EPS merchants) are likewise disqualified. In case of dispute, the decision of BPI Unibank, with concurrence of DTI, is considered final.

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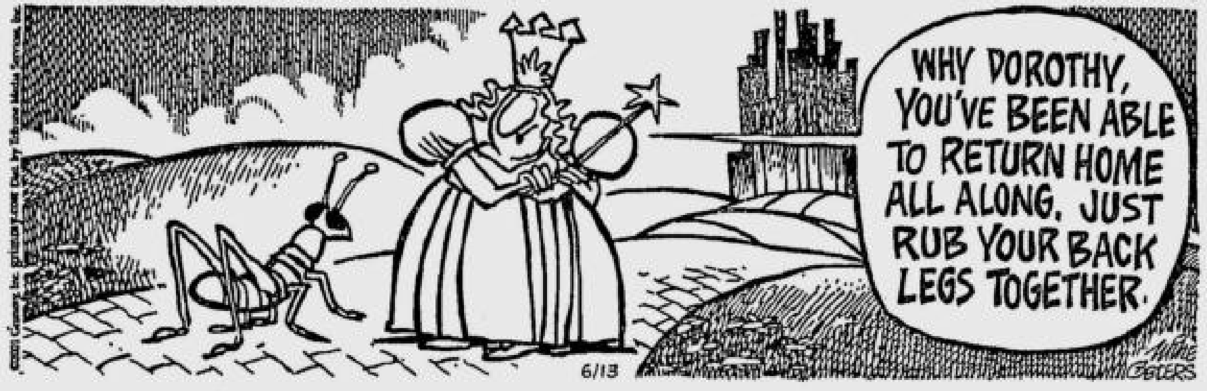
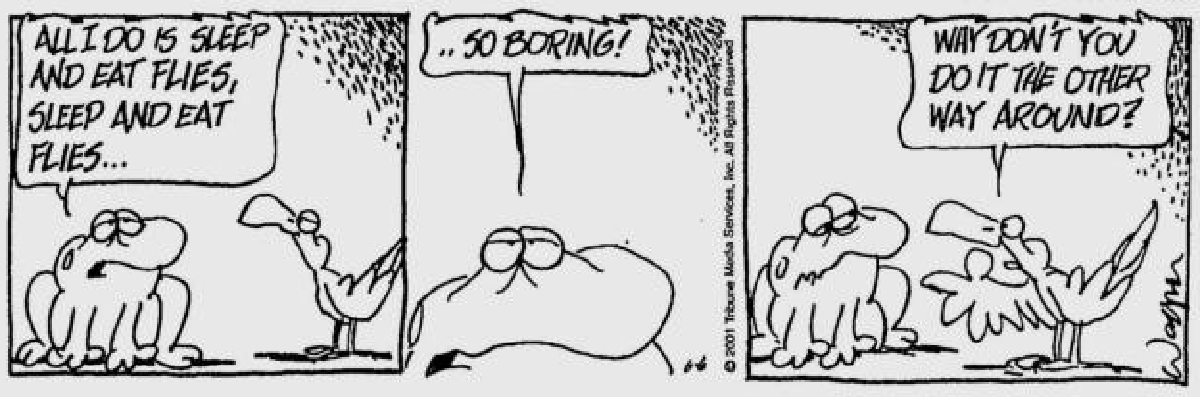
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


WHY DOROTHY, YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO RETURN HOME ALL ALONG. JUST RUB YOUR BACK LEGS TOGETHER.
6/13
MIKE PETERS

ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


ALL I DO IS SLEEP AND EAT FLIES, SLEEP AND EAT FLIES...
..SO BORING!
WHY DON'T YOU DO IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND?
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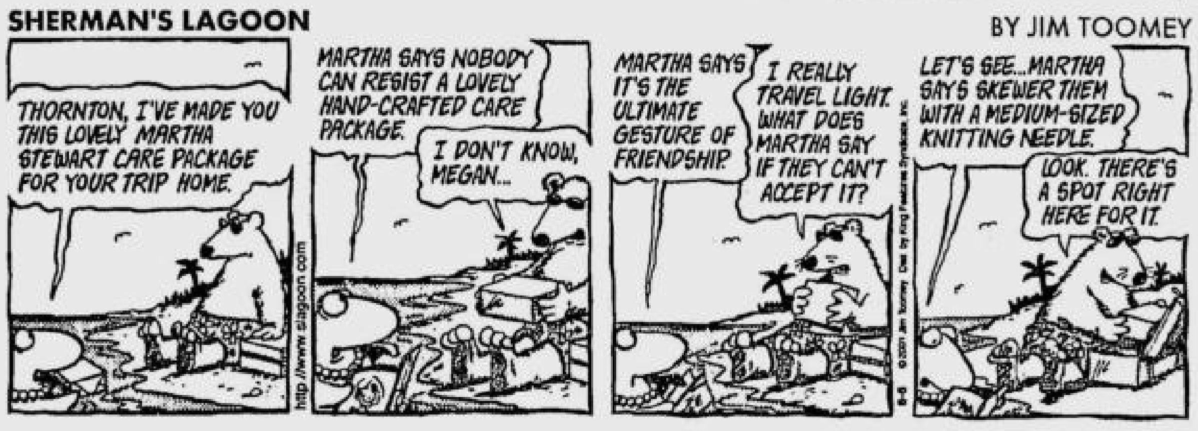
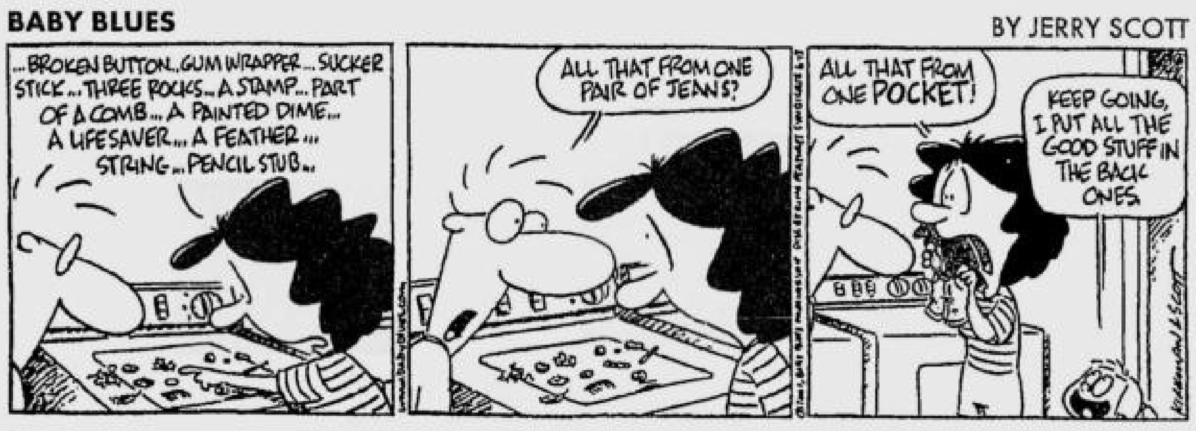
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


THORNTON, I'VE MADE YOU THIS LOVELY MARTHA STEWART CARE PACKAGE FOR YOUR TRIP HOME.
MARTHA SAYS NOBODY CAN RESIST A LOVELY HAND-CRAFTED CARE PACKAGE.
I DON'T KNOW, MEGAN...
MARTHA SAYS IT'S THE ULTIMATE GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP.
I REALLY TRAVEL LIGHT. WHAT DOES MARTHA SAY IF THEY CAN'T ACCEPT IT?
LET'S SEE...MARTHA SAYS SKEWER THEM WITH A MEDIUM-SIZED KNITTING NEEDLE.
LOOK. THERE'S A SPOT RIGHT HERE FOR IT.
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


...BROKEN BUTTON...GUM WRAPPER...SUCKER STICK...THREE ROCKS...A STAMP...PART OF A COMB...A PAINTED DIME...A LIFESAVER...A FEATHER...STRING...PENCIL STUB...
ALL THAT FROM ONE PAIR OF JEANS?
ALL THAT FROM ONE POCKET!
KEEP GOING, I PUT ALL THE GOOD STUFF IN THE BACK ONES.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Richie Sambora, Sela Ward, Yul Brynner, Tab Hunter, Suzanne Vega

Happy Birthday: Normal everyday routine will not be for you this year. You will want to delve into new territory offering a host of opportunities. It's time to spread your wings and fly. You've gathered up so much knowledge in the past that it's time to put it to good use. Get ready to enjoy the path you choose and let all your desires and intentions unfold. Your numbers: 3, 14, 17, 22, 28, 33

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Visiting individuals who don't get out much will be rewarding. Clear up problems with your peers. It's best to speak your mind and get to the bottom of problems that are disrupting your emotional well-being.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Re-evaluate your motives for spending time with some of the individuals you hang out with. It's time to be completely honest with yourself and them.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your boss isn't likely to see things your way. Lie low and wait for a better time to make your move. You can accomplish a lot if you do your best.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your need to know everything will lead you to lectures or the library. Don't leave any stone unturned, or you'll be hit with a humiliating surprise. Preparation is the key.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take care of minor physical problems. You should be careful not to leave your money lying around. Someone you least expect may walk off with something that belongs to you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You're in the mood to spend time with that special person in your life. Make plans early.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You will have to be careful not to upset females at work. If you don't play by the rules, opposition will cause delays in your plans. Try to get along with others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): What a great day to start something new. You should be using your knowledge to develop your interests. Find a good buy that will help change your image.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Someone you live with is likely to give you a hard time. Be prepared to stand up for your rights, but be aware that by doing so you may find yourself all alone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Get together with friends. You will need to be careful that you don't slip up when it comes to shipments. Delays are likely, and you should compensate if at all possible.

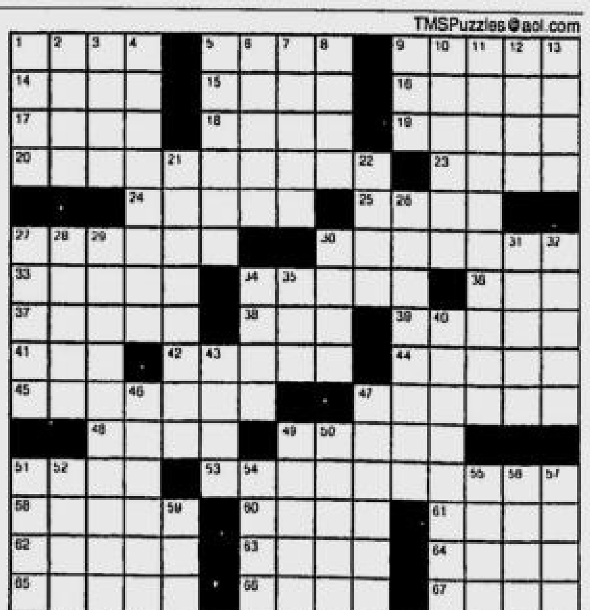
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You need to concentrate on your job. Financial limitations do not sit well with you. You may find yourself looking for a new position if you haven't been pulling your weight.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't limit yourself. If there's something you want, then go after it. You'll have no one to blame but yourself if your personal life is lacking pizzazz.

Birthday Baby: You are bright-eyed and eager to learn. You have a propensity to do all, see all and experience all. You are aggressive, disciplined and willing to take a chance to discover something new.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com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By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

5/25/01

ACROSS
1 Hook with a handle
5 Insect with a stinger
9 Burning crime
14 Lion's call
15 Out of the wind
16 Second attempt
17 Depression migrant
18 Musial or Getz
19 Flat surface
20 Masseur?
23 Yeah, sure
24 Afrikaners
25 Eve's second
27 Like a more delicate fabric
30 Student monitor
33 Sore spots
34 Remove bridles
36 Greek letters
37 Expect loyalty
38 Spanish uncle
39 Japanese seaport
41 TV oldie, "__ Ramsey"
42 Girder piece
44 Private instructor
45 Inuits
47 "M*A*S*H" co-star
48 Sorrows
49 For rent, in London
51 Alum
53 Mistreater of female elephants?
58 Inflexible
60 Installed, as carpet
61 Surrounding glow
62 Make amends
63 Fender blemish
64 Happy starter?
65 Deadly poisons
66 Dundee dagger
67 Sunrise place

DOWN
1 "Rhoda" co-star David
2 Isao of the Senior PGA
3 Mediocre
4 Handouts
5 Leak stopper
6 Temple table
7 Penn and Young
8 __ Oreille Lake
9 French avant-garde artist
10 Alleviation
11 Dependable spouse?
12 Caen's river
13 Negative in Novgorod
21 Serves a sentence
22 Indira's dress
26 Fathered
27 Shaping machine
28 Plots of land
29 Throw out the family car?
30 H.S. dance
31 "My Fair Lady" director
32 Ivan and Nicholas
34 Colorado tribe
35 Actress Long
40 Traveler's tote
43 Anjou's cousin
46 Thyroid treatment
47 Oozy sediment
49 Singer Shania
50 State one's case
51 Snatch
52 Moreno or Rudner
54 Early auto maker
55 Waikiki dance
56 Time periods
57 Enthralled
59 __ Plaines, IL

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

P	R	I	G	■	F	L	A	R	E	■	A	L	I	T
S	O	L	E	■	R	E	M	I	T	■	D	A	R	E
S	T	I	R	■	I	A	M	B	S	■	R	Y	A	N
T	E	E	M	■	G	S	A	■	■	R	O	U	N	D
■	■	■	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	H	I	P	I	S
S	O	A	R	E	D	■	■	R	I	O	T	■	■	■
A	T	S	E	A	■	A	G	A	R	■	■	T	N	T
L	I	K	E	M	O	N	E	Y	E	A	S	I	E	R
E	S	S	■	■	P	I	T	S	■	T	E	N	S	E
■	■	■	F	I	A	T	■	■	D	O	N	A	T	E
M	A	D	E	T	H	A	N	K	E	P	T	■	■	■
I	D	E	A	S	■	■	U	R	N	■	E	R	I	K
S	I	N	S	■	R	A	D	I	I	■	N	E	O	N
T	E	S	T	■	A	N	G	L	E	■	C	A	N	E
S	U	E	S	■	G	A	E	L	S	■	E	L	S	E

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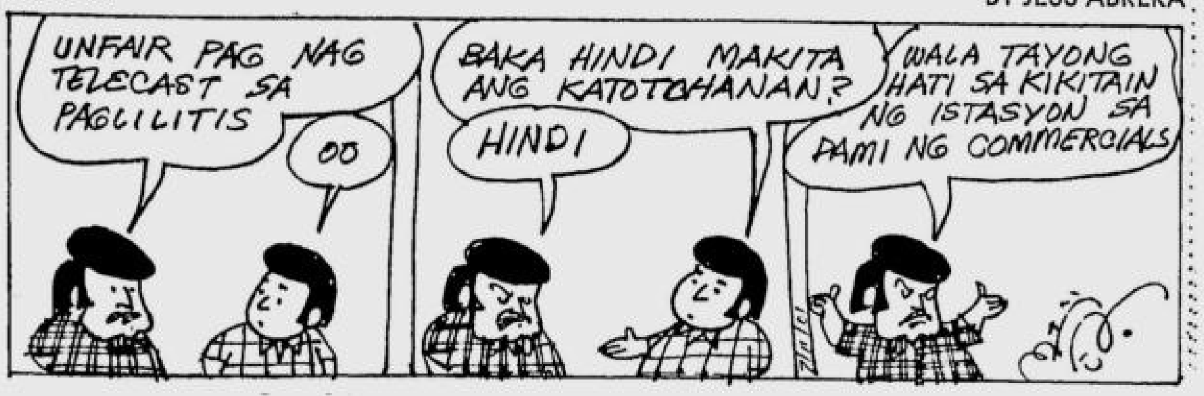
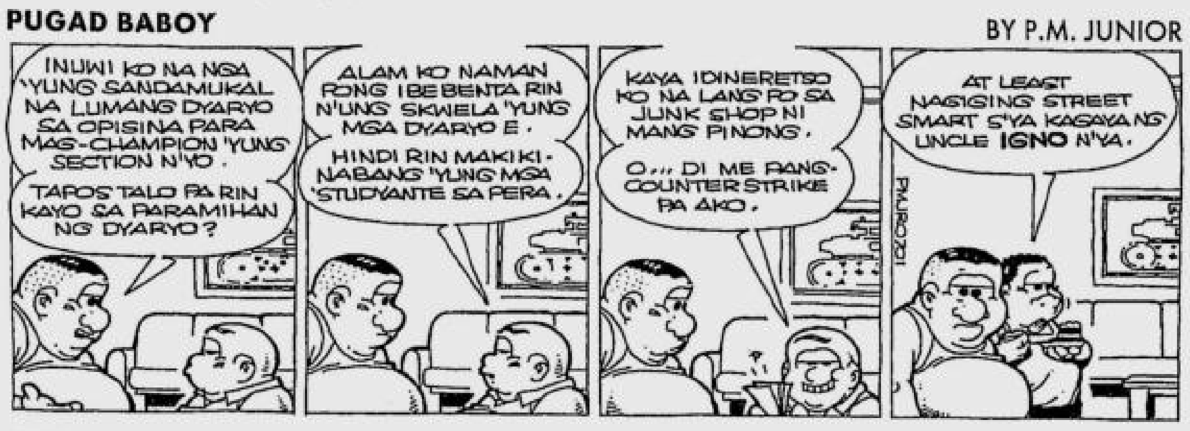
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


UNFAIR PAG NAG TELECAST SA PAGLILITIS
OO
BAKA HINDI MAKITA ANG KATOTOHANAN?
HINDI
WALA TAYONG HATI SA KIKITAIN NG ISTASYON SA DAMI NG COMMERCIALS

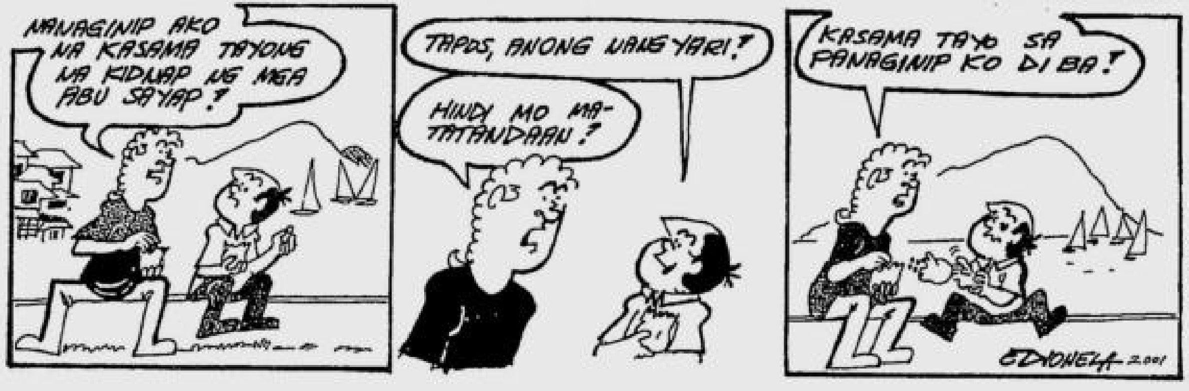
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


INUWI KO NA NGA 'YUNG SANDAMUKAL NA LUMANG DYARYO SA OPISINA PARA MAG-CHAMPION 'YUNG SECTION N'YO.
TAPOS TALO PA RIN KAYO SA PARAMIHAN NG DYARYO?
ALAM KO NAMAN PONG IBEBENTA RIN N'UNG SKWELA 'YUNG MGA DYARYO E.
HINDI RIN MAKIKINABANG 'YUNG MGA STUDYANTE SA PERA.
KAYA IDINERETSO KO NA LANG PO SA JUNK SHOP NI MANG PINONG.
O... DI ME PANG-COUNTER STRIKE PA AKO.
AT LEAST NAGIGING STREET SMART S'YA KAGAYA NG UNCLE IGNO N'YA.
PMJR0701

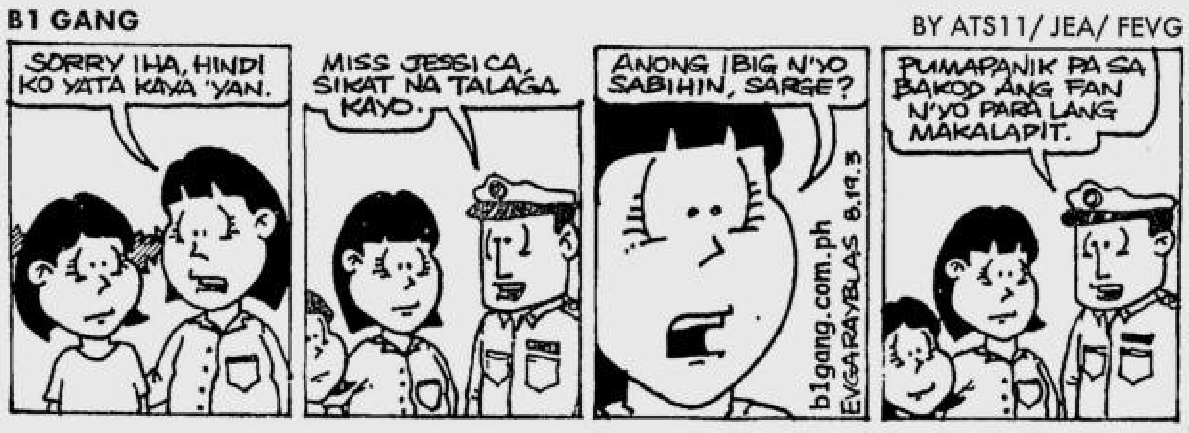
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


NANAGINIP AKO NA KASAMA TAYONG NA KIDNAP NG MGA ABU SAYAP?
TAPOS, ANONG NANGYARI?
HINDI MO MATATANDAAN?
KASAMA TAYO SA PANAGINIP KO DI BA?
EDIONELA 2001

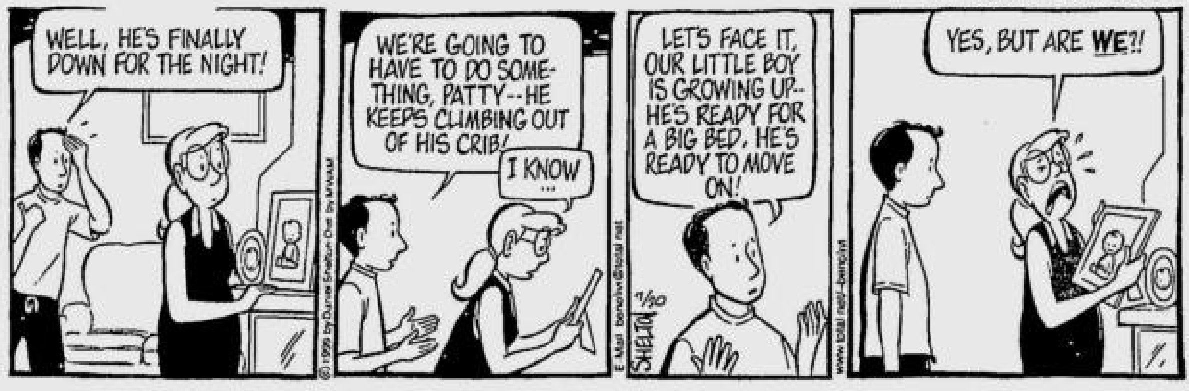
B1 GANG

BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


SORRY IHA, HINDI KO YATA KAYA 'YAN.
MISS JESSICA, SIKAT NA TALAGA KAYO.
ANONG IBIG N'YO SABIHIN, SARGE?
PUMAPANIK PA SA BAKOD ANG FAN N'YO PARA LANG MAKALAPIT.
b1gang.com.ph
EVGARAYBLAS 8.19.3

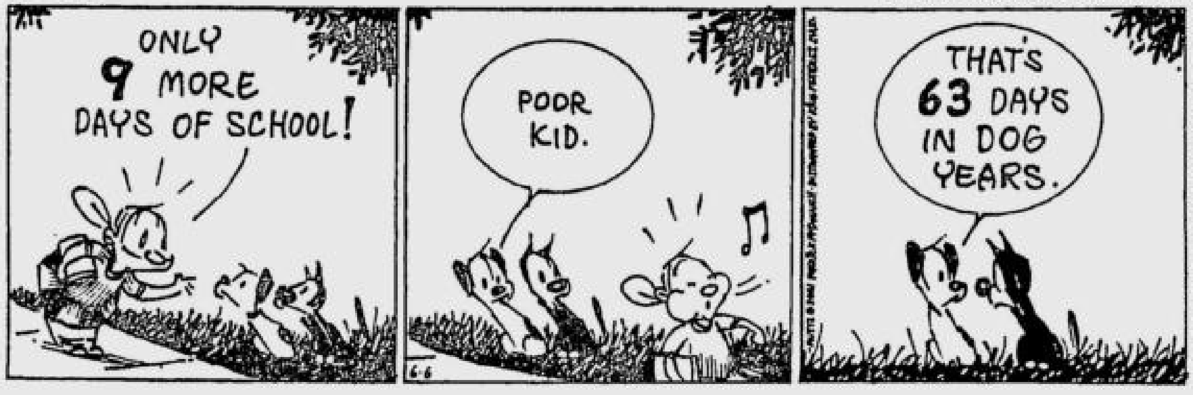
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WELL, HE'S FINALLY DOWN FOR THE NIGHT!
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, PATTY--HE KEEPS CLIMBING OUT OF HIS CRIB!
I KNOW ...
LET'S FACE IT, OUR LITTLE BOY IS GROWING UP-- HE'S READY FOR A BIG BED. HE'S READY TO MOVE ON!
YES, BUT ARE WE?!
SHELTON 7/10

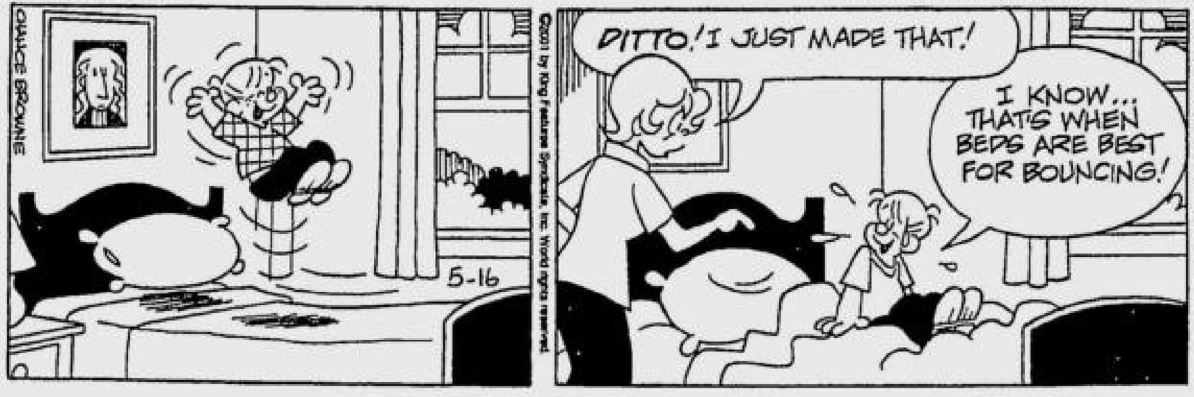
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ONLY 9 MORE DAYS OF SCHOOL!
POOR KID.
THAT'S 63 DAYS IN DOG YEARS.
6-6

HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


CHANCE BROWNE
5-16
DITTO! I JUST MADE THAT!
I KNOW... THAT'S WHEN BEDS ARE BEST FOR BOUNCING!
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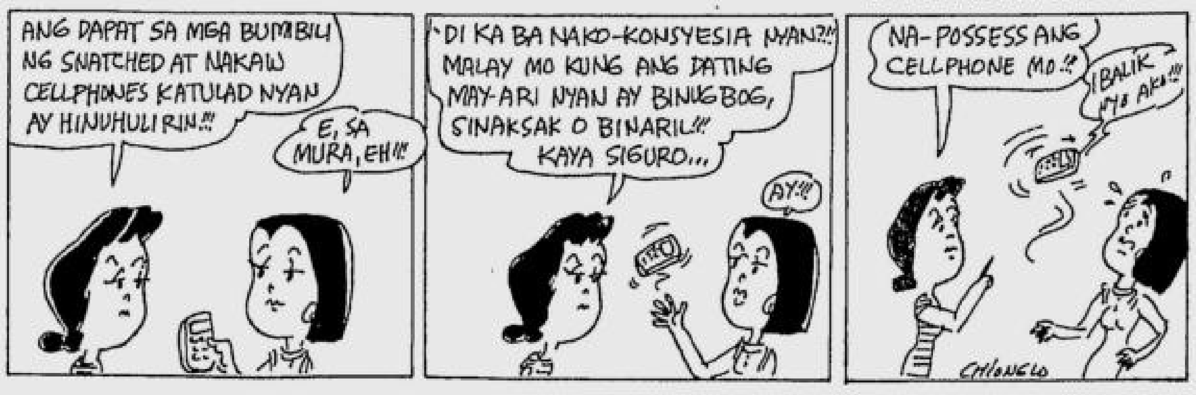
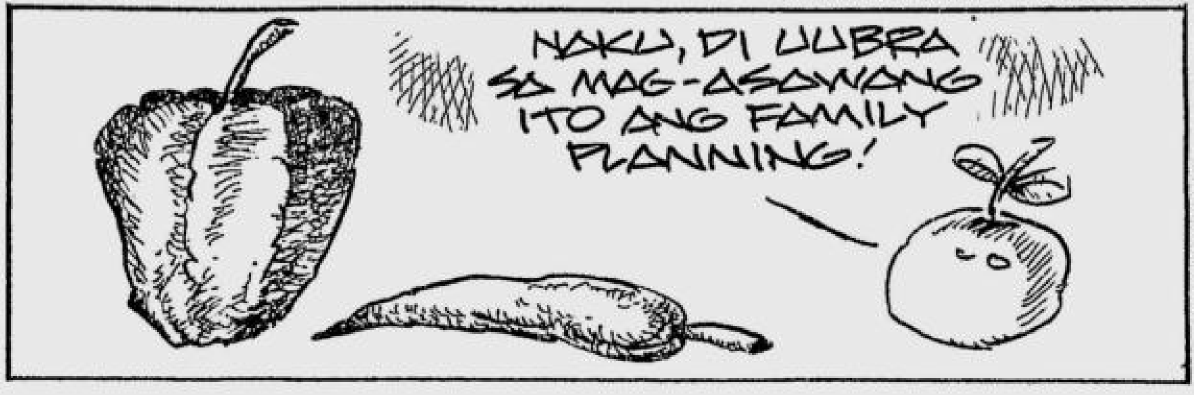
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

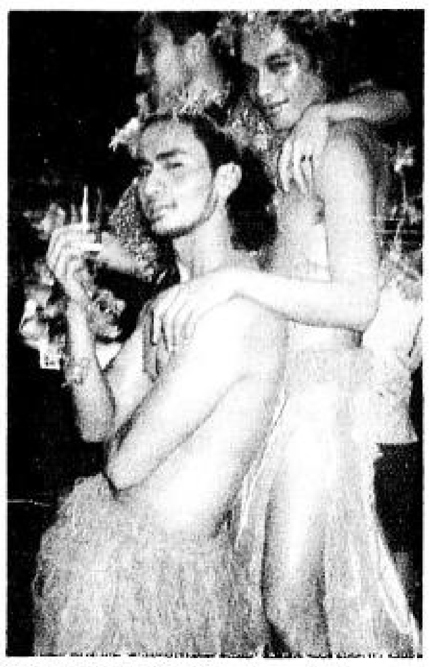

ANG DAPAT SA MGA BUMBILI NG SNATCHED AT NAKAW CELLPHONES KATULAD NYAN AY HINUHULI RIN!!!
E, SA MURA, EH!!!
'DI KA BA NAKO-KONSYESIA NYAN?!! MALAY MO KUNG ANG DATING MAY-ARI NYAN AY BINUGBOG, SINAKSAK O BINARIL!!! KAYA SIGURO...
AY!!!
NA-POSSESS ANG CELLPHONE MO!!
IBALIK MO AKO!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


NAKU, DI UUBRA SA MAG-ASAWANG ITO ANG FAMILY PLANNING!

A TOAST with the devil, "Indulge!"


ORANGE ORGASM. Junnel Liwanag and Ed Ariel on side view

I THINK I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree.

A late summer night's wet dream

Tim Yap

DENIM DELIGHT. Vina Morales in subtle seduction

"LOOK up, young man. Look up." That was what an excited partyphile whispered in my ear as I entered the NBC tent for the Asian launch of Absolut Mandarin.

But I have already noticed that, instead of the usual air kisses and cheek-to-cheek action that happens in all parties, partyphiles had their eyes glued to the ceiling.

It turned out that some "fairy orange" was making its descent and, just like a butterfly hovering over a bloom, she was flying around a giant avant garde replica of the Absolut Mandarin bottle.

A thousand oranges formed that giant—27-ft—centerpiece. The venue was arranged to look like the setting for "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Topless fairies flitted around the tent area, tempting guests with the scene's latest love potion—shots of citrus seduction, Absolut Mandarin.

The night's festivities were perfect for enticing a lover. First, tease the guests with just a hint of what's to come, maybe a peel-off invite with the word "indulge." Second, create the mood with the sweet aroma of herbs and citrus. Third, leisurely stimulate the crowd visually, aurally and orally with progressive music, entertainment and limitless booze—all done in an absolutely adrenaline-pumping fabulous way!

"We are proud to be the first country in Asia to carry the newest Absolut variant," said **Chiqui Torres-Tan**, chic in a golden Mandarin *cheongsam* with a slit on the side, which goes from here to eternity. For a minute there, I forgot about Kumander Robot.

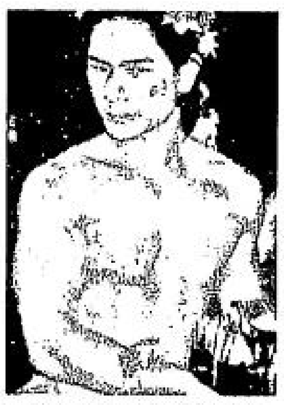
"Filipinos are really sweet," Absolut big bosses **Eva Hedberg** and **Ted McDonnell** were overheard whispering to each other as they nibbled the lusty concoctions. I hope more foreigners think the same way, too.

Then I woke up from my dream.

ABSOLUT MANDARIN. Chiqui Tan and Erich Edralin

DESIGNER'S DREAMS. Mimi Tan, Gerry Katigbak and Juliet Tan

BASEMENT SEDUCTION. Kathy Webb invites you to her next salon in Rockwell. And, oh, of course, the drink.


HAVE A TASTE. Harry de Guzman asks us to try his concoction.

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PADI' S POINT, Mindanao Ave. - July 24
WATERING HOLE, Ortigas - July 26
JEKYL & HYDE, La Salle - July 27
SOUTHERN BULLS, West Ave. - July 30
*All shows start at 10:00 P.M.
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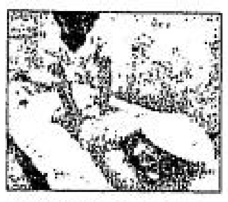
EXPATS UNITE! Eva Hedberg and Ted McDonnell

E! PARTY. Doctors on board, Eric Tan and Ed Tolentino



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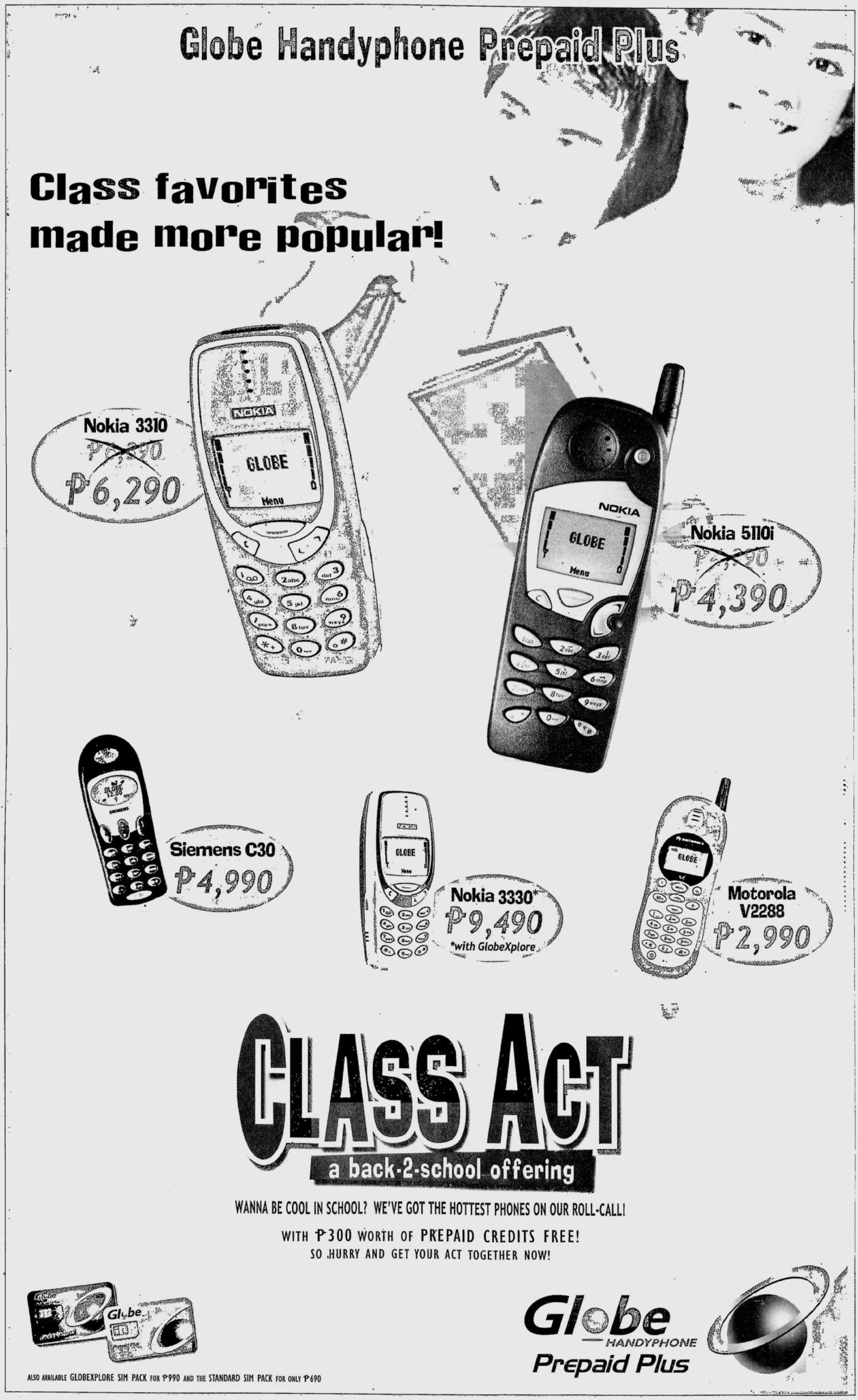

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